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LOUGH DEARG. See page 3.



Engraved for the "Holy Wells of Ireland."

THE

HOLY WELLS

OF IRELAND,

CONTAINING AN

Annals

AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF THOSE VARIOUS PLACES

OF

PILGRIMAGE AND PENANCE

WHICH ARE STILL ANNUALLY VISITED BY THOUSANDS OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC PEASANTRY.

WITH A MINUTE

DESCRIPTION OF THE PATTERNS AND STATIONS

PERIODICALLY HELD IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS OF IRELAND.

BY PHILIP DIXON HARDY, M.R.I.A.

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N. AND N.W. OF IRELAND;" "PICTURE OF DUBLIN," &c. &c.
AND EDITOR OF "THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL."

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W. A. GOOD, CHIEF OF STAFF
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TO THE READER.

IN laying before the Christian public of Great Britain, a brief though comprehensive description of some of the most noted of the “Holy Wells” of Ireland, which are still annually resorted to by thousands of the peasantry, as places of *pilgrimage, penance, and purgatory*, I deem it necessary to mention, that I had originally intended to publish the pamphlet *anonymously*;—it occurred to me, however, that it would immediately be said that it had been got up for party or political purposes, and I therefore at once determined to place my name in the title page, as this would not only enable any individual who might question any of the statements which I have made in it, to press home upon me any inaccuracy or false statement with which they might suppose me to be chargeable; but would, at the same time, give me an opportunity of solemnly affirming, that in bringing forward the subject at the present moment, *I am altogether uninfluenced by any political or party motive*—a fact, which, I think, must appear evident when I state, that I am not now, nor ever was, a

member of any *political association*, nor am I a member of the Established Church ; being connected now, as I ever have been, from principle, with the Independent or Congregational body of Protestants. I trust, therefore, I shall be believed when I declare, that the object I have in view is simply, by holding up to the eye of the public the **SUPERSTITIOUS AND DEGRADING PRACTICES** I have described, by thus bringing public attention to bear upon them in their true colours, clearly to demonstrate, that they are really the prolific sources of much of the **IRRELIGION, IMMORALITY, and VICE** which at present prevail to such an awful extent through so many portions of our highly favoured land.

That they are not only opposed in their nature and tendency to every precept of the moral law and of the Christian religion, but are so many stains upon the character of a civilized and even nominally Christian people, and consequently a disgrace to the age and the country in which we live, requires but a candid investigation of the facts stated in the following pages fully to demonstrate. Under such circumstances, it might naturally be expected that educated and enlightened Roman Catholics would most readily join with Protestants in an endeavour to suppress them, especially as they are well known to be mere remnants of heathen superstitions, practised by our forefathers

before the Christian era, and afterwards appended to the rites and ceremonies enjoined by the Church of Rome in the darker ages of Christianity; and this more particularly as they have been the subject of serious animadversion by intelligent individuals travelling through our island. While, however, they are considered by some few intelligent Roman Catholic gentlemen in the light we have viewed them, and while one or two slight, though apparently sincere attempts, have been made to suppress them, by some of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the simple fact of numerous Holy Wells, Patterns, and Stations, being still not only sanctioned but patronized by the priests of the Roman Catholic church, must appear proof positive, that they are still considered by such, as a part and portion of the machinery with which they maintain their dominion over the minds of the ignorant and uninformed. Indeed on this point there can be no doubt, as it cannot be questioned for a moment, by any one aware of the influence possessed by the Roman Catholic priests over the people of their charge, that if they deemed it expedient to do so, the practices alluded to and complained of might long since have been altogether suppressed and done away with.

In order to prevent it being said that the descriptions given were sketched or written by ignorant or interested persons, I have copied, as

corroborating the other statements made, several sketches by writers well known to the public as individuals of liberal and enlightened minds. It is only necessary to mention the names of Mr. Crofton Croker, Mr. Inglis, and Mr. Carleton, (the author of " Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry,") to assure the reader of this being the case;* and with such evidence on the subject, I do hope, that after an impartial investigation, the voice of an enlightened public will be raised against the longer continuance of practices as *degrading* and *immoral* as any of those which are attended to by the most unenlightened heathen nations, to the present moment unacquainted with any revelation of the divine will. Should such be the result of the present publication, the object of the writer will have been fully answered.

* Under a similar impression, I have taken the liberty of copying from Mr. "Barrow's Tour round Ireland," a sketch made by Mr. D. Maclise, of a Patron Day at St. Ronogue's Well, near Cork; and from the " Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry," an Etching by Brook, of a Station as graphically delineated by the talented author of that universally esteemed publication.

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PILGRIMAGES AND PENANCES IN IRELAND.

It has been so frequently affirmed, by the advocates and friends of the Church of Rome, that the charges of *idolatry* and *immorality*, so often brought forward against the members of that communion, are mere malicious fabrications of their enemies, that many well-disposed Protestants, especially those resident in England and Scotland, without inquiring into the truth or fallacy of the matter, have been led to take it for granted that such is really the case. The facts detailed in the following pages, and which admit of no denial or contradiction, will be found proof positive on the point. They relate to deeds and transactions which take place every year, in every quarter of our island, at times and seasons when any individual wishing to satisfy himself on the subject, will have ample opportunity of doing so, by merely visiting the places to which reference is given.

It is impossible, indeed, for any traveller, to pass over any considerable portion of the country, more especially in the south and west, without meeting with numerous *Holy Wells* and other places of superstitious

resort, celebrated either for the cure of cattle, or the restoration to health of beings of the human race ; and having around them various emblems of superstitious reverence, such as rags and ribbons hung on *holy* places, as memorials of the sacredness of the waters—as offerings to the tutelary saint, who is supposed to preside over and impart to them their healing virtue,—or as remembrancers to the Almighty in the day of judgment. For the present, however, we shall confine our observations to those places which are resorted to by individuals from various parts of the country, as places of **PENANCE** or **PURGATORY**, and of which there are not a few in the various districts of Ireland. And first, as commanding the greatest share of attention, being the best and longest known, considered the most holy, and consequently the most resorted to, we shall notice

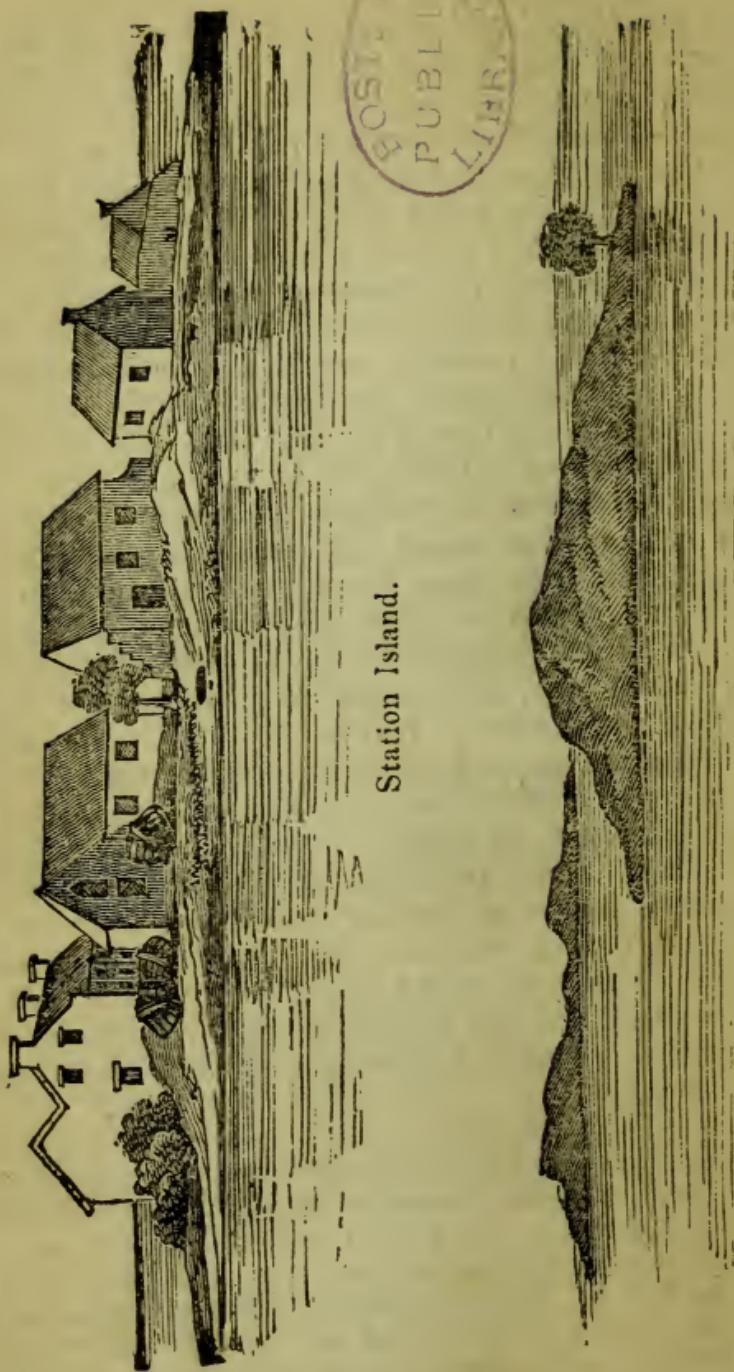
ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY,

Situated on an island of Lough Dergh, a lake lying in the southern part of the County of Donegal, near the borders of Fermanagh and Tyrone, nearly six miles in length, and four in breadth, surrounded on every side by bleak barren hills, covered with heath from base to summit, and along the entire of which not more than six small human habitations are visible. It contains several rocky islands. The one to which the pilgrims resort, and which lies about half a mile from the shore, is of very limited dimensions, rising very little above the level of the lake, and presenting altogether a barren, forbidding aspect. The largest is by some called St. Aveog's, who is said to have been buried in it ; by others St. Fintanus's ; and by others the Island of Saints. There was a convent of Canons Regular, of the Order of St. Augustin, subject to the Monastery of the Apostles Peter and Paul at Armagh, erected in it ;

and a fine chapel and convenient houses built for the monks, over whom a prior presided ; two of whom were usually chosen to instruct the pilgrims. The remains of some of these buildings are still to be seen. It is said, that the passage into Purgatory was first found in this island ; but it being near the shore, and a bridge from the main land into it, which gave the people free and ready access, this passage into Purgatory was stopped up, and another opened in the one now called Station Island ; by which means, it is said, the monks wisely gained two points, viz. the profit of a ferry-boat for wafting the pilgrims over the lake, and an opportunity of working farther upon the imaginations of the people, and making them believe, that they were really going into another world. It is now said, that this passage is hid from them for unknown reasons, but that in due time it will be discovered by some devout pilgrim. This whole island is a rocky piece of ground, in some places bare, and in the rest, having but a very thin covering of earth. It is in length 126 yards, in the broadest place 45, and the narrowest 22 over.

It is covered with several modern buildings, fitted up for the most part as places of worship, and each one dedicated to some particular saint : in the vicinity of these are a number of circular stone walls, from one to two feet in height, enclosing broken stone or wooden crosses, which are called saints' beds ; and around these, on the hard and pointed rocks, the penitents pass upon their bare knees, repeating a certain form of prayer at each.*

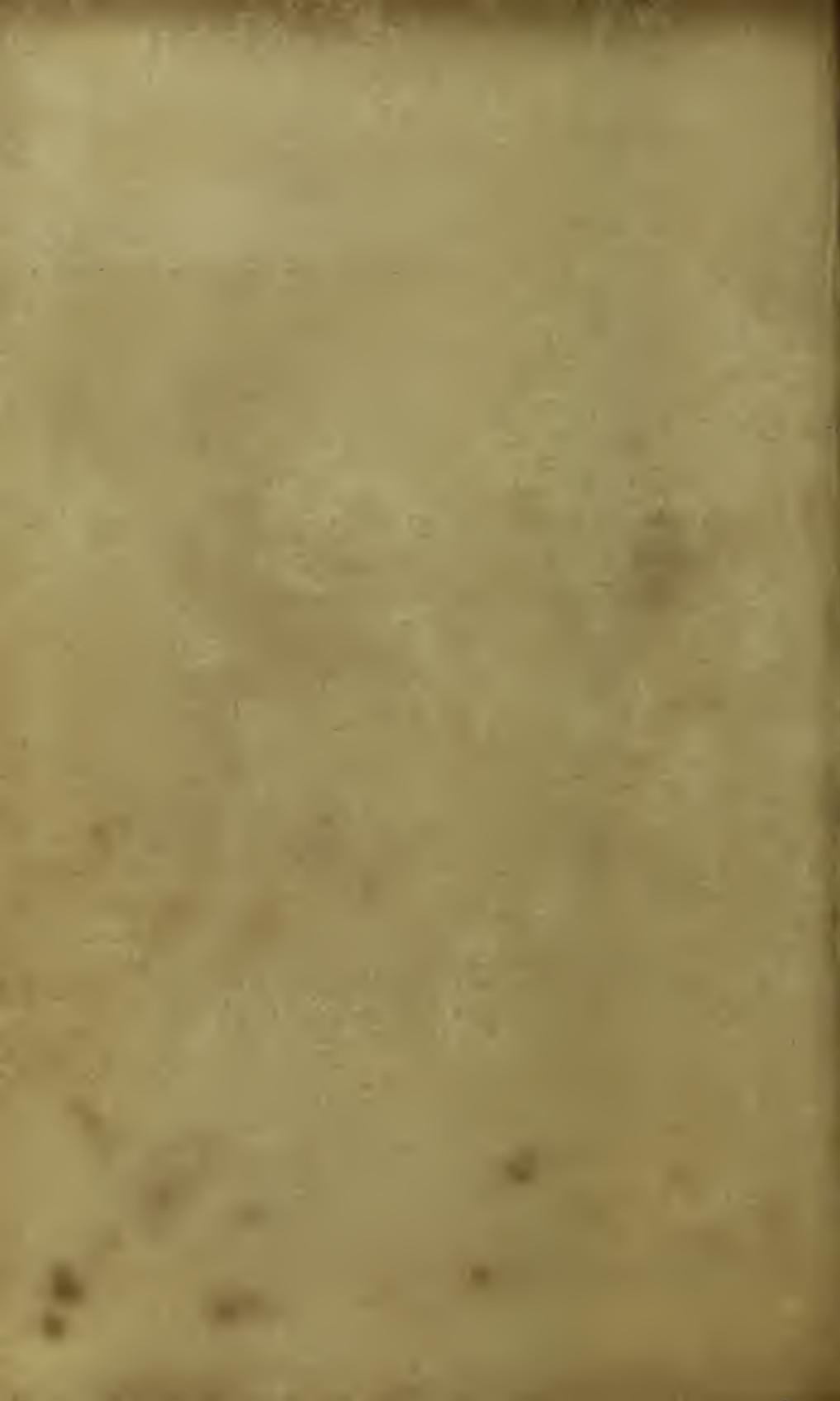
* The circles are commonly called the seven saints' penitential beds, viz. St. Brenan's, St. Catherine's, St. Bridget's, St. Columb's, St. Moluis and St. Patrick's, and St. Avcog's ; some are nine, some ten, and some eleven feet in diameter, but St. Patrick's is sixteen, for Moluis and he lay together. The walls are about two feet high, every one of them having a small gap for an entrance into it. The Irish believe, that these saints lay several nights upon these beds, by way of penance for their own sins, and the sins of the people.



Saint's Island.



One of the Seven Beds in which Penance is performed. See page 3.

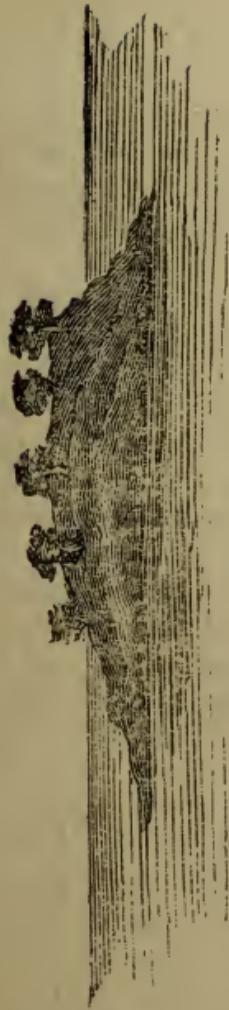






St. Bridget's Chair stands close to the water's edge, and in which, it is said, whoever once sits, is ever after preserved from accident or sudden death. See page 4.

Kelly's Island.



Ash Island.



Prior's Island.

They then visit the chapels, where they remain night and day, performing certain ceremonies, and saying a prescribed number of prayers, which are in proportion to the amount or degree of crime committed. The pilgrim, while engaged in these rites, which generally occupy several days, is allowed to partake of but one meal of bread and water in the twenty-four hours ; and while in the prison, in which the individual continues a day and night previous to quitting the island, food of every description is prohibited. Twenty-four priests are appointed to this place, each officiating for one hour at a time. The pilgrims are kept awake at night by a man appointed for the purpose, who, with a small switch or rod, gently taps any one he may perceive disposed to slumber. On the spot upon which the little chapel dedicated to St. Patrick now stands, there is a rock, in which was formerly a cave capable of holding six or eight persons, where it was believed, the pains and torments which await the wicked in another world might be experienced by those who entered it—and which Sir James Ware, in his Antiquities, attempts to prove was hollowed out by Ulysses, while sojourning on this spot, to enable him to hold converse with some of the inhabitants of the infernal regions. This was the last place visited by the penitents ; and in this they had to remain all night. From its closeness, and from want of sufficient air, many persons from time to time lost their lives in it, while others were deprived of their senses. In consequence of which, in the year 1630, it was suppressed by an order of the Lords Justices, who had it laid open to public view, and the whole affair exposed. It was, however, during the reign of James II, again resorted to as a place of penance, and a new cave hollowed out of the rock ; and it remained so till about the year 1781, when it was closed up by an order of the prior, who considered it dangerous, on account of the number of persons who attempted to crowd into it at once, that they might by the sufferings they endured in it, escape the torments to be inflicted in another world. The chapel dedicated to St. Patrick, and which

is called the Prison-house, is now substituted for this cave.

An early writer describing the place, says—"As soon as the pilgrims come within sight of the holy island, they pull off their shoes and stockings, and uncover their heads, and walk thus with their beads in one hand, and sometimes a cross in the other, to the lake-side, from whence they are wafted over, paying every one six-pence for their freight. After landing, they go immediately to the Prior, and humbly ask his blessing; and then to St. Patrick's Altar, where, kneeling down, they say one Pater, one Ave, and one creed. Rising up, they kiss the stone of the Altar, and from thence go into the Chapel, where they say three Paters, three Aves, and one Creed. Then, beginning at a corner of the chapel, they walk round it and St. Patrick's Altar seven times, saying a decad (that is ten ave Marys, and one pater noster) every round. In the first and last circuit, they kiss the cross that is before the chapel, and touch it with their shoulders, the last circuit. Next, they go to the penitential beds, every one of which they surround thrice outwardly saying three paters, three aves, and one creed. Then kneeling, they say three paters, three aves, and one creed. After which they enter the bed, and circuiting it thrice in the inside, they say three paters, three aves, and one creed; which done, they kneel and say again, three paters, three aves, and one creed. All this must be performed at each bed. Leaving the penal beds, they go to the water's edge, saying five paters, five aves, and one creed. From the water they return to the chapel, where they repeat the lady's psalter, (which consists of fifty aves, and five paters, and, according to some, of one hundred and fifty aves and fifteen paters.) And thus they finish one station, which must be performed thrice a day, about sun-rising, noon, and sun-setting; no other food but bread and water being allowed the pilgrims. On the ninth day, the prior puts the pilgrims into the prison, a place into which the light of day is not allowed to enter, and which has been substituted

for the cave now closed up, where they are closely shut up for twenty-four hours. During this time, all manner of refreshment is kept from them, and they are debarred of the liberty of answering the necessities of nature ; but, above all things, they are cautioned not to sleep, the prior telling them, that the devil will certainly carry them away, if he should catch them napping."

The time of remaining on the Island has, in latter times, been reduced to three days—and the period of confinement in the prison to twelve hours. After quitting the prison, and before leaving the island, it was formerly the practice to go into the water, and, being stark naked, wash their whole bodies, and more particularly the head, to signify that they were entirely cleansed from their sins. This part of the ceremony is now dispensed with.

They hear Mass several times every day ; and have a sermon occasionally preached to them in Irish, about one o'clock in the afternoon. They are obliged to confess before they begin their stations, and some do it much oftener, paying sixpence for every confession. In their circuitings and perambulations, they must walk with a cross staff in their hands. And their crossings, bowings, and kissing of stones are almost innumerable. If any one cannot conveniently perform this penance himself, when he comes to the place, he may obtain license from the prior for another to do it for him. It is also usual for some, that never saw Lough Dergh, to get it done by proxy ; which is esteemed to be as good as if they did it in their own persons.

It is almost incredible what crowds visit this island annually, during the months of June, July, and August—it being no unusual thing to see from 900 to 1000 persons of both sexes upon it at one and the same time—an extraordinary circumstance, when it is considered that the island does not measure more than three hundred paces in any direction. They are ferried across in a boat, which can carry seventy or eighty persons at once, for which they are charged $6\frac{1}{2}$ d ; each and yet so inadequate is this conveyance to the purpose, that the shores of the

lake are frequently covered with persons waiting their turn—the greater number of whom have arrived from very distant places, many from England, some from France, and others all the way from America. It has been justly observed by an intelligent writer, that a painter who wished to make a drawing of the river Styx, the ferryman and his boat, with the groupes of expectant shades on the banks, could not find a better bodying forth of that imaginary scene than is presented by Lough Dergh. The island has, in comparatively recent times, been rendered notorious by a sermon preached in its favour by Pope Benedict XIV. ; and not very long since an advertisement appeared in the public papers, from a Roman Catholic Bishop, stating his intention of holding a station in it during that season, which he did. Some years ago, in consequence of the number of persons who had crowded into the boat, it was upset, when the majority of the unfortunate individuals met a watery grave.

Having thus given a rough sketch of this place of penance, we shall, to prove that the description is not exaggerated or highly coloured, lay before the reader the statements of two individuals, by whom the island was recently visited, and who were eye-witnesses of the different scenes they have described—for the authenticity of the facts mentioned in the following communication, we pledge ourselves ; the other is extracted from Mr. Inglis's Journey through Ireland in 1834, a work admitted by persons of every religious persuasion to be impartial and unbiassed by the feelings of party or prejudice.

From an Individual who was an eye-witness of the scenes he describes.

" This island is about half a mile from the shore ; on approaching it we found all the people walking round one of the buildings, in the direction of the sun.

“ There are two chapels, one for confession, and another for general worship. In the former no strangers are admitted; but on entering the latter by one of the galleries, a mighty multitude of the most apparently devout worshippers I ever beheld, presented themselves. All were kneeling except the choir, and every one busy for himself, without the smallest interruption from his neighbour. The only instruments they used were their beads, crucifix, and manual. Their food is a small quantity of bread, which they bring into the island with them, and water, *which by the Priest's blessing, is supposed to be made equally nutritive as wine.* They take this once a day, except when in the prison, where they remain twenty-four hours. During this period they are prohibited from tasting food of any kind. Twenty-four Priests are the regular number for officiating in this place, each, one hour. The prison is a dungeon into which the light of day is not allowed to enter. A man with a switch is kept in regular exercise here, to keep the pilgrims in a wakeful state. Sleep is very dangerous, for a single nod may lose the soul for ever, without the interference of all the fathers and saints of the calendar, and a considerable sum of money.

“ I have, after much difficulty, obtained access to a publication chiefly intended for the direction of the pilgrims of Lough Dearagh, which I designed to transmit you, but was unable to purchase it—they are so very cautious about the person into whose hands they will allow it to come. I shall therefore give you a few extracts from it, in your own language:

“ “ THE PILGRIMAGE OF LOUGH DERGH.

“ “ *I will give thee understanding, and instruct thee in his way in which you are to go.*”—Psalm xxxi. 5, 10.

“ “ APPROVED AND WRITTEN BY B. D.

“ “ *Blessed are they whose sins are forgiven.*”—Psalm xxxii.

“ In his Address to the Reader, the Author says, (page 4,) ‘that the honor of St. Patrick moved him to publish this little treatise.’

“ “ Christian Reader, observe that it is very proper and profitable for a man conversant in the turbulent world,

who having the care of a house and family, is necessarily involved in the tribulations and affairs of this wicked world, and surrounded with infinite occasion and snares of offending God, to withdraw himself from these unavoidable snares of sin, either perpetually, and during his life, or at least for some time, and to retire to some solitary place, to look to the salvation of his soul, following herein the example of the royal prophet, saying, ‘Behold I have retired and remained in the wilderness.’ Psalm 1.5—7

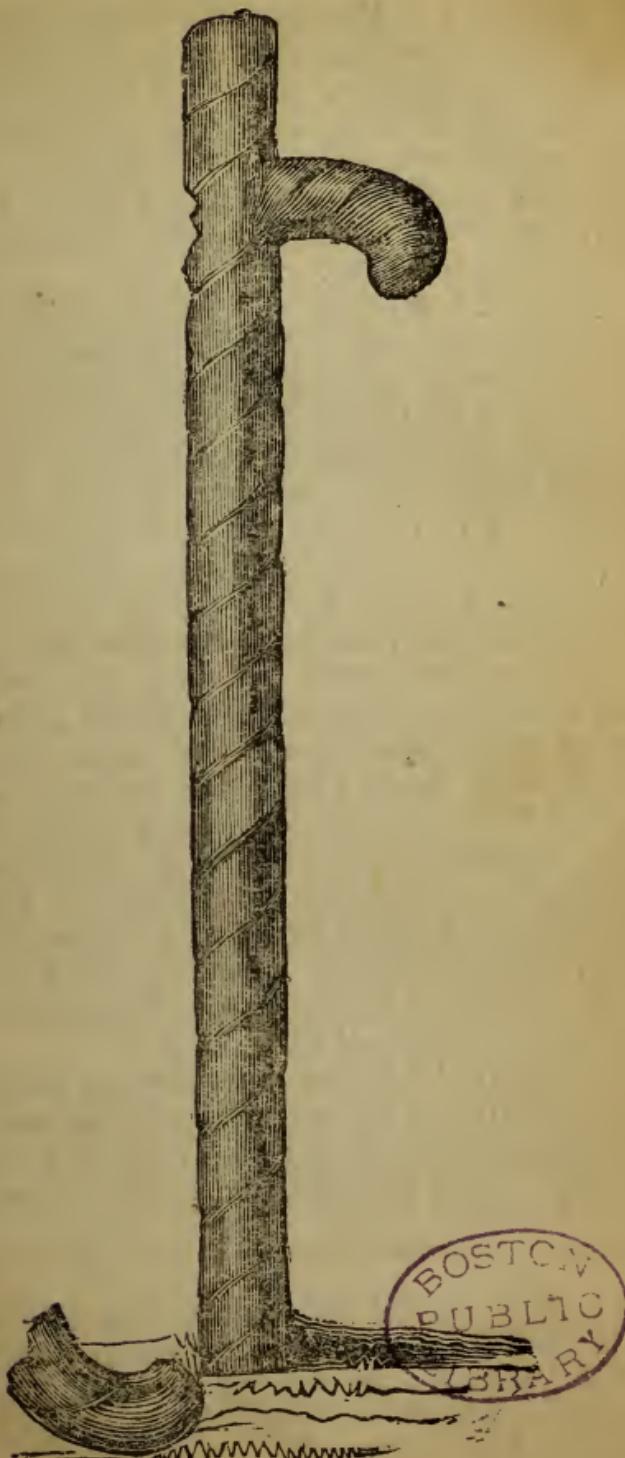
“ ‘ The pilgrims are directed, on entering this holy ground, to approach it with all due reverence and awe, bare-headed and bare-footed, ‘ For if the place wherein the angel spoke to Moses, concerning the Israelites delivery from the bondage of Pharaoh, was so holy that he was commanded to tread upon it bare-footed, why should not this place be holy, where God commissioned and deputed our apostolic Moses, St. Patrick, to enlarge us out of the slavery and captivity of our spiritual Pharaoh, the Devil ? And if Joshua was commanded to loose his shoes from off his feet, when he spoke to the prince of the host of the Lord, because the place whereon he stood was holy, why should not this place be holy where we speak to God and St. Patrick, prince and chief of the saints of our nation, and go thither bare-footed ? Finally, if the prophet Isaiah was commanded to walk naked for the sins of others, why should not we enter the place of penance bare-footed and bare-headed, to expiate our enormous crimes ? ’

“ ‘ Moreover, we pass into the island by water : that saying of the royal prophet (Psalm lxv.) may be applied to us, “ We have passed through fire and water, and thou leadest us into a place of refreshment,—that by the fire of devotion and waters of tribulation, God may lead us hence to the spiritual refreshment of our souls and consciences.” ’

“ ‘ Having humbly received the Superior’s blessing, the pilgrims kneel before the altar of St. Patrick, signing themselves with the sign of the cross, saying, ‘ in whose name we begin our pilgrimage,’ and there they say one

Ave, one Pater, and a Creed. The one pater is to signify the unity of the divine nature, who, according to Isaiah and St. Paul, worketh all our works (Isaiah xxvi. 12)—(Cor. xii. 11) especially our penance which we now begin. We say an ave, that as we received our Saviour and Redeemer by the blessed Virgin Mary, so we would by her intercession obtain grace and remission of our sins from God, and perseverance in doing penance, and eternal bliss. We say a creed, that by it we would make a profession of our faith before God, for it is impossible to please God without faith. (Heb. xi.)—These same reasons may serve for all paters, aves, and creeds said hereafter. Rising from the altar we kiss its stone, that it may be cleansed from our sins, like Isaiah, who was purged and cleansed when his lips were touched with a stone taken from the altar. (Isa. vi.) Afterwards kneeling at the corner of the chapel, we repeat three paters, three aves, and one creed, to obtain from the Holy Trinity three things necessary for penance, to wit—the fear of the Lord, whereby sin is banished away, (Ec. 13.)—humility, by which our prayers penetrate the clouds, and patience, by which we possess our souls.—(Luke 29.) In our first going round the chapel we kiss the cross which standeth before the chapel door, to signify that we ought to embrace and lift up our cross, and follow Christ, who spilt his precious blood seven times for us—1. in his circumcision ; 2. in the garden of Gethsamene ; 3. by the scourges when he was bound to the pillar ; 4. when he was crowned with thorns ; 5. when he was stript naked upon Mount Calvary ; 6. when he was nailed to the cross ; 7. after his death, when his side was pierced with a lance. And we touch it with our shoulders, by which we signify that we ought to persevere in it in carrying our cross to the end.*

* It were well if those who are led away by such superstitions, similar to those of which the Apostle says they have a show of wisdom, in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, (1 Col. ii. 23,) would compare these doings with the words of our Saviour in *St. John's Gospel*, iv, 22—24.



Stone Cross on Station Island.

“(Page 10.) ‘We begin at the corner of the Chapel, going round it and the altar seven times, in which time repeat seven decades, according to that of the Royal Prophet. Psalm xxvi. I have surrounded and sacrificed in his tabernacle ; either in satisfaction of our seven capital sins which we commit in the seven days of the week ; or because a just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth again,’ Prov. iv.

“(Page 12.) ‘Chap. iv. Of the stations about the seven penitential beds. Those seven beds are little cells that are dedicated to seven saints—the first to St. Brenan ; the second to St. Catherine ; the third to St. Bridget ; the fourth to St. Column ; the fifth to St. Patrick ; the sixth to St. Avit ; the seventh to St. Blosses.

“(Page 14.) ‘To avoid therefore the same doom with the wicked, we go round the stones standing in the water three times, to satisfy for the sins of our will, memory, and understanding ; saying in the mean time, five Paters, five Aves, and one creed, to redeem the punishment due to the sins of our five outward senses ; then, humbly kneeling on the sharp stones and fixing our confidence and hope in Jesus Christ the corner-stone, we say five other Paters, five Aves, and one Creed, that we may extract remedies from his five sacred wounds, against the transgressions of our five sacred senses. From whence we advance to a round stone, at a distance out in the Lough, on which we stand, and say one Pater one Ave, and one Creed, to signify that we beg one thing of God, to wit, life everlasting.’ Psl. xxvi.

“(Page 16) ‘Leaving the water, we proceed forward to the Altar of St. Patrick, where we say one Pater, one Ave, and one Creed ; that the Lord who moved us by his divine grace to begin our penance, would give us

“ Ye worship ye know not what—but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

strength to bring the same to a successful and prosperous end. Afterwards we enter the Chapel and repeat the Psalter, or Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, first thanking God who is magnified, exceedingly pleased with penance, by whose power and divine assistance we triumphed victoriously ; having thrown the horse and the rider (the devil and sin) into the sea, Exodus xv.'

"(Page 19.) 'As soon as we leave the grave or vault, we immediately plunge ourselves into the water, washing our heads and bodies to signify that we are washed and cleansed from the filth of sin, and have broke the dragon's head in the waters. Psalm lxviii. 13. And even as the children of Israel left their enemies drowned in the Red Sea, so should we leave our spiritual enemies drowned in this Red lough, by which we are buried with Christ unto death, that with him we might rise again to eternal glory ; which I earnestly beseech our most merciful God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to grant to both me and you. Amen.'''*

From Mr. Inglis's "Journey throughout Ireland" in 1834.

"From Pettigo to Lough Dergh, the distance is about three miles, over bog and mountain. It is a scramble all the way, endeavouring to avoid the marsh and bog land, that cannot, however, be avoided ; and one at length thinks of following the example of the pilgrims, who, with bare feet, get over the difficulties of the path with comparative ease. It is said that no road is constructed here, lest the devotions of the pilgrims should be interrupted by the presence of too many heretics. It proved a very toilsome journey, and it was with much satisfaction that I espied Lough Dergh in the hollow below. Nothing can be more desolate than the landscape around Lough Dergh. Barren heathy hills surround it on all sides, possessing neither form nor eleva-

* The above extracts are taken from a copy of the work obtained on the spot, before the present inquiries gave rise to a caution mentioned by the Correspondent, who some time since visited this place.

tion, to give the slightest interest to the scene. The lake is considered to be about nine miles in circumference. As I descended towards the shore of the lake, I could see that the island, which is not quite a mile from the shore, was entirely covered with persons ; and on the bank, which I soon reached, I found upwards of two hundred pilgrims waiting to be ferried over. They were generally respectably dressed. Some were sitting, some lying on the grass ; some more impatient, were standing close to the water, waiting the arrival of the ferry-boat ; and some, more impatient still, had been warmed into devotion, by the distant view of the holy place, and were already on their knees. They were of all ages ; and about three-fourths of the number were women.

“ At length the ferry-boat arrived from the island, bringing a cargo of those whose penances were concluded ; and who did not generally exhibit in their appearances and countenances, that expression of satisfaction which might be expected amongst those, who had just abridged by some thousands of years, the term of their purgatory. The boat having discharged its cargo, a new cargo was quickly found ; and before I was permitted to approach the holy place, it was necessary that I should send the letter with which I was provided, to the prior, who might grant or refuse the leave requested.

“ Meanwhile, until the boat should return with the reply, I took advantage of my opportunities ; and my acquaintance with some of the pilgrims,—women,—who had returned from the island, and who were resting on the grass before commencing their homeward journey. I chanced fortunately to light upon a group of very communicative persons, who seemed more desirous of concealing,—with the view, no doubt, of exalting the excellence and advantages of the services in which they had been engaged : and, as one reason for telling me some of the secrets of Lough Dergh, they said that I, being a Protestant, should not be able to see any thing on the island. I thought, at first, they meant that the holy doings there, would be miraculously concealed from the profane eyes of a heretic ; but I found that

the hinderances were to be merely human. I was told, that the moment it was known to the prior, that a stranger was about to visit the island, orders were issued to suspend all devotions : and this I found afterwards to be true. The pilgrims may remain at the station three days, six days or nine days ; and some have been so far indulged, as to have permission granted them to fast, pray, and do penance for fifteen days. But this is an especial favour. Nothing is eaten or drunk during the whole of the time any one remains on the island, excepting bread and water, or meal and water. Bread and meal can both be purchased on the island ; but most of the pilgrims carry their scrip along with them.

“ I was considerably surprised when, upon my remarking, that with only one meal of bread and water in twenty four-hours, the pilgrims must become faint, the women with whom I was speaking, said, ‘ Oh, no ! the wine revives us, and gives us strength.’

“ ‘ Wine !’ said I ; ‘ then you have wine : who pays for the wine ?’ ‘ Oh,’ said she, ‘ it costs nothing ; but I see your honour doesn’t understand.’ And then she explained to me the pleasant contrivance by which the pilgrims are regaled with wine, free of expense to them or any body else. The water of the lake is boiled, and, being blessed, is called wine ; and it is given to the faint and greedy pligrims as hot as they are able to swallow it. One of the women showed me her lips, covered with blisters from the heat of the ‘ wine’ she had drunk ; and, no longer doubt of the fillip it must give to one’s sensations, to have some half boiling water poured into an empty stomach. I was assured the effect was wonderful ; and I well believe it.

“ The penances consist of constant prayer, fasting and want of sleep. Before leaving the island, every pilgiim must remain twenty-four hours in prison as they call it. Here they neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep. Not even the renovating ‘ wine’ is allowed during these twenty-four hours : and means are also taken to prevent those in prison from sleeping. A person is appointed for this purpose ; but I was assured that the office of keeping each other awake is

generally kindly performed by each other, from the best of motives, I dare say ; for the whole efficacy of the penance, is nullified by the indulgence of sleep.

“ The penance of praying around the saints’ beds is also practised. These are little circular stone walls, with stones and crosses inside , which are called saints’ beds ; and around these, on their knees, the pilgrims perform their ‘stations,’ repeating at certain spots, a certain number of prayers. I inquired whether these revolutions were peformed on the bare knees ; and the answer was, that this depended on circumstances.

“ The sum exacted from the pilgrim, for all the comforts of St. Patrick’s purgatory, including wine, amounts to 1s. 4½d. ; of which 6½d. is paid for the ferry. If, however, the penitent choose, there is nothing to prevent him from being generous ; and it is not improbable that his generosity may be acceptable. Every pilgrim, who is a candidate for the benefits of Lough Dergh, must bring with him a recommendation from the parish priest. I inquired particulary whether the priest encouraged the pilgrimage or dissuaded from it. The answer was, that he sometimes enjoins it, but most commonly does not influence the applicant one way or another. It is evident that the country priest has no interest in recommending the pilgrimage, since the absence of his parishoner and the expense of the pilgrimage, will diminish rather than increase his revenue.

“ After waiting about an hour, during which the crowd of arriving pilgrims had greatly increased, the boat returned with another freight, and with the permission required. I immediately took my seat in the boat, and watched the extraordinary scene that ensued. The boat is capable of containing from forty to fifty persons ; but hundreds press forward to it. No one however is admitted without a ticket, previously obtained and paid for ; and a thick set blustering fellow, and one or two assistants, armed with sticks at the side of the boat, pushing back, by main force those who are not to enter ; and just as roughly thrusting forward, those who are to be favoured. The pilgrims are stowed like so many brutes in the bottom of the boat, from front to

stern,—the master shoving and pushing them as he would a drove of pigs ; and I believe no one could contemplate the whole scene without being forcibly reminded of the paintings, which all are familiar with, of Charon and his cargo of damned. I was told by the master of the boat, that strangers are generally ferried over in a separate boat ; and that I was particularly honoured by being permitted to go in the same boat with the pilgrims.

“ When the complement was completed, we shoved off ; and the water being rather agitated, we had the advantage of the pilgrims’ prayers all the way. As we approach the island, though still at more distance from it could I see the cloud in motion ; but as we approached nearer, the order had gone forth ; and all were at rest from their penances and prayers. The moment we reached the island the pilgrims in the boat were driven on shore—most of them through the water ; and I waited a few minutes, the arrival of a priest, under whose guidance I visited, and walked over the island. Every spot was crowded ; there was not a vacancy of a yard square over the whole surface of the island. All were seated on the ground, with books, and most of the women with rosaries, in their hands : but it was evident that all devotions had been ordered to be suspended. No one either moved or spoke. I passed through the chapel where four priests were seated, and the floor of which was entirely covered with pilgrims seated on it ; and looked into the confessional, which was every bit as crowded : and, after perambulating every part of the island, I may venture to say, that there could not have been fewer than two thousand persons upon a spot not three hundred yards long, and, not half that breadth.

“ There used formerly to be a cave, on the present site of St. Patrick’s chapel, which, in its day, was even more efficacious than its more modern substitute. This cave was shut up by the order of the Lords Justices in the year 1630 ; but in the reign of James II, the spot was again resorted to, and a new cave was excavated, which in the year 1780 was again closed by order of the

prior. The building now erected is the 'prison, or chapel,' used by the penitents.

" The station at Lough Dergh, begins on 1st June, and continues till 15th August. The day on which I visited Lough Dergh, twelve boat loads of pilgrims passed to the island, with upwards of forty persons in each ; but supposing forty to be the average number, five hundred passed that day. The number of days, from the opening of the station, to its conclusion, is seventy five ; and supposing the number of persons passing daily, to be only one-half of the number that passed on the 12th of August —viz. two hundred and fifty—the whole number of pilgrims visiting Lough Dergh, would amount during the season, to nearly nineteen thousand : and from the inquiries I made, as well as from this mode of calculation, I have reason to think I am below, rather than above the mark.

" I was not allowed a great while to inspect the island ; the priest hurried me through, in order, no doubt, that the pilgrims and penitents might resume their devotions ; and had I not collected my information from other sources, I could have told the reader very little of what are the doings at St Patrick's Purgatory.

" It is impossible to witness a spectacle like this, without reflections being excited of rather a painful kind. I am not going to write a tirade against Popery, and Catholic superstitions ; but when I see thousands assembled at a place like this, far distant from their homes, I cannot but regret the loss of time so fruitlessly spent. Many have travelled from the remotest parts of Cork, Kerry, and Waterford ; and must have employed five or six weeks on the pilgrimage, at a season too, when, if labour is to be had at all, is to be had then. July is the period of the hay harvest ; and the loss of employment during that month, must have been a loss to many of at least 22s. 6d. to say nothing of the expenses of the journey. The Catholic bishop, who, in the year 1830, advertised the holding of a station there, by his lordship in person, deserved to have had his ears pulled : and Pope Benedict the XIV, who preached a sermon re-

commanding this pilgrimage, would have been well punished by having the *wine* of Lough Dergh served up to his holiness, in place of his own *Lacrimæ Christi*. As for the poor infatuated and ignorant pilgrims, deluded by popes and bishops, they are sincere, I doubt not, in their devotions: and although I am far from thinking, that pilgrimage and penance are acceptable in the sight of God, I yet believe, that the Deity cannot regard with aversion, any homage that is rendered in sincerity.*

" In returning from the island, the same scene was enacted as I had witnessed before. I returned with a freight of pilgrims, whose term had expired; and although it was then afternoon, another boat-load were still waiting their turn. I walked back to Pettigo, in company with several pilgrims, among whom was a priest, who told me he had come eighty miles to the station, and that he found himself much the better for the discipline. He told me, also, that whatever the weather might be, no one ever caught cold: and that he never knew of any one suffering, from sitting on the damp ground for days, in their wet clothes, and bare feet. I ought to mention, that many of the returning pilgrims were walking with us, and listening to the priest's exordium. There were three or four other priests performing their station on the island. I suppose it is thought necessary, that the station should occasionally be so honoured. When I reached Pettigo, I invited my companion, the pilgrim priest to take part of a leg of mutton which I had bespoken for dinner; but he excused himself, on the ground of his vow, which did not permit him to eat till next day. I only

* It will be evident from this, that Mr. Inglis was not very strait-laced in his religious sentiments—he was in the broadest sense of the phrase—a *liberal*; but with all his liberality, he could not shut his eyes to the grossness of the various superstitions, which he mentions he observed in several parts of the country.—ED.

remained an hour at Pettigo, and then proceeded on my journey to Donegal."

From the foregoing statements, the reader will have formed some idea of St. Patrick's Purgatory, and of the penances performed in it. In the following graphic description, which we have extracted from a little work published some time since, under the title of "The Lough Dearg Pilgrim," by the talented author of "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry,"* will be found a still more faithful and vivid picture of the abominable and disgusting superstitions which characterise this "*sacred spot*."

EXTRACTS FROM "THE LOUGH DEARG PILGRIM."

"There is no specimen of Irish superstition equal to that which is to be seen at St. Patrick's Purgatory, in Lough Dearg. A devout Romanist who has not made a pilgrimage to this place, can scarcely urge a bold claim to the character of piety. As soon as a man who is notorious for a villainous and immoral hardihood of character, and has kept aloof from 'his duties,' thinks proper to give himself up to the spiritual guidance of his priest, he is sent here to wipe out the long arrear of outstanding guilt for which he is accountable—to neutralize the evil example of a bad life by this redeeming act of concentrated devotion.

"It is a fact, that many an unfortunate sinner runs a

* We would recommend to the perusal of any one who may wish to see the natural working of the system of Popery on the minds of the ignorant peasantry, a little work by the same author, called "Father Butler," and to which the story from which we have taken the above extracts is appended. While it is a valuable commentary on the doctrines of the Romish Church, we esteem it, as a story, by no means inferior, either in interest or execution, to any other of Mr. Carleton's productions.—ED.

career of vice and iniquity on the strength of Lough Dearth; particularly those who reside in that part of the kingdom, where, in consequence of their contiguity to it, a belief in its efficacy is most habitually present in the mind.

“ I was, at the time of performing this station, in the middle of my nineteenth year—of quick perception—warm imagination—a mind peculiarly romantic—a morbid turn for devotion—a candidate for the priesthood, or, what is more technically termed, *lignum sacerdotus*, having been made slightly acquainted with Latin, and more slightly still with Greek. At this period, however, all my faculties merged like friendly streams into the large current of my devotion. Of religion I was completely ignorant, although I had sustained a very conspicuous part in the devotions of the family, and signalized myself frequently at chapel by taken the lead in a rosary.....

“ It was about six o’clock of a delightful morning, in the pleasant month of July, when I set out upon my pilgrimage, with a single change of linen in my pocket, and a pair of discarded shoes upon my bare feet; for, in compliance with the general rule, I wore no stockings. The sun looked down upon all nature with great good humour—every thing smiled around me; and as I passed for a few miles across an upland country, which stretched down from a chain of dark rugged mountains that lay westward, I could not help feeling, although the feeling was indeed checked, that the scene was exhilarating.....

“ After getting five or six miles across the country, I came out on one of those bye-roads which run, independently of all advantages of locality, ‘ up hill and down brae,’ from one little obscure village to another. These roads are generally paved with round broad stones, laid curiously together in longitudinal rows, like the buttons on a school-boy’s jacket. Owing to the infrequency of travellers on them, they are quite overgrown with grass, except in one stripe along the middle, which is kept by the naked hoofs of horses and the

tread of foot passengers. There is some tradition connected with these roads, or the manner of their formation, which I do not remember.

“ At last I came out upon the main road ; and you will be pleased to imagine to yourself the figure of a tall, gaunt, gawky young man, dressed in a good suit of black cloth, with shirt and cravat like snow, striding solemnly along, without shoe or stocking ; for, about this time, I was twelve miles from home, and blisters had already risen upon my feet, in consequence of the dew having got into my shoes, which, at the best, was enough to cut up any man ; I had, therefore, to strip and carry my shoes—one in my pocket, and another stuffed in my hat ; being thus, with great reluctance, compelled to travel barefoot : yet I soon turned even this to account, when I reflected that it would enhance the merit of my pilgrimage, and that every fresh blister would bring down a fresh blessing.....

“ The first that I suspected to be fellow pilgrims were two women, whom I overtook upon the way. They were dressed in grey cloaks, striped red-and-blue petticoats ; drugged, or linsey-wolsey gowns, that came within about three inches of their ankles. Each had a small white bag slung at her back, which contained the scanty provisions for the journey, and the *sconns* (round oaten cakes) crisped and hard baked for the pilgrimage to the lake. The hoods of their cloaks fell down their backs, and each dame had a spotted cotton kerchief pinned round her *dowd* cap at the chin, whilst the remainder of it fell down the shoulders, over the cloaks. Each had also a staff in her hand, which she held in a manner peculiar to a travelling woman—that is, with her hand round the upper end of it, her right thumb extended across its head, and her arm, from the elbow down, parallel with the horizon. The form of each, owing to the want of that spinal strength and vigour which characterise the erect gait of man, was bent a little forward ; and this, joined to the idea produced by the nature of their journey, gave to them something of an ardent and devoted character, such as the mind and

the eye would seek for in a pilgrim. I saw them at some distance before me, and knew by the staves and white bags behind them, that they were bound for Lough Dearg. I accordingly stretched out a little that I might overtake them ; for, in consequence of the absorbing nature of my own reflections, my journey had hitherto been a solitary one, and I felt that society would relieve me. I was not a little surprised, however, on finding that as soon as I topped one height of the road, I was sure to find my two old ladies a competent distance before me in the hollow, (most of the northern are of this nature,) and that when I got to the bottom, I was as sure to perceive their heads topping the next hill, and then gradually sinking out of my sight. I was surprised at this, and, perhaps, a little nettled, that a fresh active young fellow should not have sufficient mettle readily to overtake two women. I *did* stretch out, therefore, with some vigour, yet it was not till after a chase of two miles or so, that I found myself abreast of them.

"As soon as they noticed me, they dropped a curtsey each, addressing me at the same time as a clergyman ; and I returned their salutation with all due gravity. Upon my inquiring how far they had travelled that day, it appeared that they had actually performed a journey seven miles longer than mine. 'We needn't ax your Reverence if you're for the I'lan?' said one of them. 'I am,' I replied, not caring to undeceive her as to my Reverentiality.....

"In the midst, therefore, of all my sanctity, I felt proud of the old woman's mistake as to my priesthood, and really had not so much ready virtue about me, on the occasion, as was sufficient to undeceive her. I was even thankful to her for the inquiry, and thought, on a closer inspection, I perceived an uncommon portion of good sense and intelligence in her face. 'My very excellent, worthy woman,' said I, 'how is it that you are able to travel at such a rate, when one would suppose you should be fatigued by this time, after so long a journey?' 'Musha,' said she, 'but yer Reverence ought to know that.'—I felt puzzled at this ; 'How should I

know it" said I.—"I'm shure," she continued, "you cuddn't expect a poor ould crathur o' sixty to travel at this rate, at all, at all; except for razons, your Reverence"—looking towards me quite confidentially and knowingly. This was still more oracular, and I felt very odd under it; my character for devotion was at stake, and I feard that the old lady was drawing me into a kind of vicious circle. "Your Reverence knows, that for the likes o' me, that can harly hirsel to the market, iv a Saturday, Lord help me! an' home agin, for to travel at this rate, would be impossible, any how, except," she added, "for what I'm carrian", Sir, blessed be God for id!"—peering at me again with a more knowing and triumphant look. "Why, that's true, said I, thoughtfully; and then assuming a bit of the sacerdotal privilege, and suddenly raising my voice, although I was as innocent as the child unborn of her meaning—"that's true: but now, as you appear to be a sensible, pious woman, I hope you understand the nature of what you *are* carrying—and in a proper manner, too, for you know that's the chief point." "Why, Father, dear, I do my best, avourneen; an' I ought, iv a sartinty, to know id, bekase blessed Friar Hagan spent three days instructin' Mat and myself in id; an' more betoken, that Mat sent him a sack iv phaties, an' a bag iv oats for his trouble, not forgettin' the goose he got from myself, the Micklemas afther."—"Arrah, how long is that ago, Katty, a-haygur?" "Ten years," said Katty. "Oh! it's more, I'm thinkin'; it's ten years since poor Dick, God rest his sowl, died, and this was full two years afore that: but no matther agra, I'll let your Reverence hear the prayer, at any rate." She here repeated an Irish prayer to the blessed Virgin, of which that beginning with "Hail, Holy Queen!" in the Roman Catholic prayer-books, is a translation. While she was repeating the prayer, I observed ber hand in her bosom, apparently extricating something, which, on being brought out, proved to be a scapular; she held it up, that I might see it: "Yer Reverence," said she, "this is the ninth journey iv the kind I made; but you don't wonder now,

I bleeve, how stoutly I'm able to stump it.'—‘ You really do stump it stoutly, as you say,’ I replied. ‘ Aye,’ said she, ‘ an’ not a wan o’ me but’s as weak as a cat, at home, scarce can put a han’ to any thing ; but then, your Reverence, my eldest daughter, Ellish, just minds the house, an’ lets the ould mother mind the prayers, as I’m not able to do a han’s thurn, worth namin’.’ ‘ But you appear to be stout and healthy,’ I observed, ‘ if a person may judge by your looks.’ ‘ Glory be to them that giv id to me, then ; *that I am*, at the present time, *padre deelish*. But don’t you know I’m always so durin’ this journey ; I’ve a wicket heart-burn, that torments the very life out o’ me, all the year round till this ; and what ’ud your Reverence think, but it’s sure to lave me, clear and clane, a fortnight or so afore I come here ; never wanst feels a bit iv id, while I rouse and prepare myself for the islan’, nor for a month after I come here agen : *Glora Dhia agas a wurriah !* (Glory to God and the Virgin ! a common phrase.).....

“ My feet by this time were absolutely in griskins, nor was I by any means prepared for a most unexpected proposal, which the spokeswoman, after some private conversation with the other, undertook to make. I could not imagine what the purport of the dialogue was ; but I easily saw, that I myself was the subject of it, for I could perceive them glance at me occasionally, as if they felt a degree of hesitation in laying down the matter for my approval : at length she opened it with great adroitness—‘ Masha, an’ to be sure he will, Katty dear an’ darlin’—and mightn’t you know he wid—the refusin’ to do it isn’t in his face, as any body that has eyes to see may know—you ashamed—and what for wid you be ashamed ?—astore, it’s ‘imself that’s not proud, or he wouldh’t tramp it, barefooted, along wud two ould crathurs like hus ; him that has no sin to answer for—but I’ll spake to ‘im myself, and ye’ll see it’s he that wont refuse id. Arrah ! your Reverence, but Katty an’ I war thinkin’, that as there’s ony three ov iz, an’ the town’s afore iz, where we’ll rest a while, plase God—for by that time the shower that’s away over there will

be comin' down—that as there's but three iv iz, would it be any harm if we sed a bit of a rosary, and your Reverence to join us ?'

" This was, indeed, a most unexpected attack ; but it was evident that I was set down by this curious woman as a paragon of piety ; though, indeed, her object was rather to smooth the way in my mind, for what she intended should be a very excellent opinion of her own godliness.

" I looked about me, and, as far as my eye could reach, the road appeared solitary. I did, 'tis true, debate the matter with myself, pro and con, for I felt the absurdity of my situation, and of this abrupt proposal, more than I was willing to suppose I did. Still, thought I, it is a serious thing to refuse praying with this poor woman, because she is poor—God is no respecter of persons—this, too, is a rosary to the Blessed Virgin ; besides, nothing can be too humbling for a person when once engaged in this holy station—' So, pride, I trample you under my feet,' said I to myself, at a moment when the appearance of a respectable person on the road would have routed all my humility. I complied, however, with a very condescending grace, and to it we went. The old women pulled out their beads, and I got my hat, which had one of my shoes in it, under my arm. They requested that I would open the rosary, which I did : and thus we kept tossing the ball of prayer from one to another along the way, whilst I was bending and sinking on the hard gravel in perfect agony.

" But we had not gone far, when the shower, which we did not suppose would have fallen until we should reach the town, began to descend with greater bounty than we were at all prepared for, or than I was at least ; for I had no outside coat : but, indeed, the morning was so beautiful, that rain was scarcely to be apprehended. With respect to the old lady, she appeared to be better acquainted with the necessary preparations for such a journey, than I could be : for as soon as the shower became heavy, (and it fell very heavily,) she

PILGRIMS GOING TO LOUGH DEARG,



Sketched for the "Holy Wells of Ireland," by B. Clayton, jun.

whipped off her cloak, and, before I could say a syllable to the contrary, had it pinned about me. She then drew out of a large four-cornered pocket of red cloth, that hung at her side, a hare's-skin cap, which in a twinkling was on her own cranium. But what was most singular, considering the heat of the weather, was the appearance of an excellent frieze jacket, such as porters and draymen usually wear, with two outside pockets on the sides, into one of which she drove her arm up to the elbow, and in the other hand carried her staff like a man—I thought she wore the cap, too, a little to the one side on her head. Indeed, a more ludicrous appearance could scarcely be conceived than she now exhibited. I, on the other hand, cut an original figure, being six feet high, with a short grey cloak pinned tightly about me, my black cassimere small-clothes peeping below it—my long, yellow, polar legs, unincumbered with calves, quite naked; a good hat over the cloak, but no shoes on my feet—marching thus gravely upon my pilgrimage, with two such figures!

“ In this singular costume did we advance, the rain all the time falling in torrents. The town, however, was not far distant, and we arrived at a little thatched house, where ‘ dry lodging ’ was offered above the door, both to ‘ man and baste; ’ and never did an unfortunate group stand more in need of *dry* lodging, for we were wet to the skin. On entering the town, we met a carriage, in which were a gentleman and two ladies. I chanced to be walking a little before the woman, but could perceive, by casting a glance into the carriage, that they were in convulsions with laughter; to which I have strong misgivings of having contributed in no ordinary degree. But I felt more indignant at the wit, forsooth of the well-fed serving man, behind the coach, who, should also have his joke upon us; for as we passed, he turned to my companion, whom he addressed as a male personage—‘ And why, you old villain, do you drive your cub to the ‘ island ’ pinioned in such a manner?—give him the use of his arms, you sinner; ’ thus intimating that I was a booby son of her's, in leading strings.

The old lady looked at him with a very peculiar expression of countenance; I thought she smiled, but never did a smile appear to me so pregnant with bitterness and cursing scorn. ‘Aye,’ said she, ‘there goes the well-fed heretic, that neither fasts nor prays—*his* God is his belly—they *have* the fat of the land for the present, your Reverence—but wait a bit. In the mane time we had better get in here, a little, till this shower passes—ye see the sun’s beginnin’ to brighten behind the rain, so it can’t last long; and a bit ov breakfast will do none of us any harm.’

“ We then entered the house aforesaid, which presented a miserable prospect for refreshment; but as I was in some measure identified with my fellow travellers, I could not, with a good grace, give them up. I had not, at the time, the least experience in life; was incapable of that discrimination which guides some people, as it were by instinct, in choosing their society; and had, altogether, but a poor notion of the more refined decorums of life.

“ Whilst we were at breakfast, the landlady, with a piece of foresight for which I afterwards thanked her, warmed a pot of water, in which my feet were bathed, laid my shoes on their sides upon the hearth-stone, where they were soon quite dry; then took out of a large three-cornered pincussion, with tassals, which hung at her side, a darning needle, and, having threaded it, she drew a white woollen thread several times along a piece of soap, pressing it down with her hand until it was quite soapy—this she drew, very tenderly, through the blisters which were risen on my feet, cutting it at both ends, and leaving a part of it in the blister. It is, decidedly, the best remedy that ever was tried, for I can declare that during the remainder of my pilgrimage, not one of *these* blisters gave me the least pain.

“ When breakfast was over, and these kind attentions performed, we set out once more; and from this place, I remarked, as we advanced, that an odd traveller would fall in upon the way: so that before we had gone many miles further, the fatigue of the journey was much

lessened by the society of the pilgrims. These were now collected into little groups, of from three to a dozen each, with the exception of myself and one or two others of a decenter cast, having the staff and bag. The chat and anecdote were, upon the whole, very amusing; but although there was a great variety of feature, character, and costume among so many—as must always be the case where people of different lives, habits, and pursuits, are brought together—still I could perceive that there was a shade of strange ruminating abstraction apparent in all. I could observe the cheerful narrator relapse into a temporary gloom, or a fit of desultory reflection, as some train of thought would suddenly rise in his mind. I could sometimes perceive a shade of pain, perhaps of anguish, darken the countenance of another, as if a bitter recollection was awakened; yet this often changed, by an unexpected transition, to a gleam of joy and satisfaction, as if a quick sense or hope of relief flashed across his heart. When we came near Petigo, the field for observation was much enlarged. The road was then literally alive with pilgrims, and reminded me, as far as numbers were concerned, of the multitudes that flock to a market on a fair day. Petigo is a snug little town, three or four miles from the lake, where the pilgrims all sleep on the night before the commencement of their stations. When we were about five or six miles from it, the road presented a singular variety of grouping. There were men and women of all ages, from the sprouting devotee of twelve, to the hoary, tottering pilgrim of eighty, creeping along, bent over his staff, to perform this soul-saving work, and die.

“ Such is the reverence in which this celebrated place is held, that as we drew near it, I remarked the conversation to become slack: every face put on an air of solemnity and thoughtfulness, and no man was inclined to relish the conversation of his neighbour, or to speak himself. The very women were silent. Even the lassitude of the journey was unfelt, and the unfledged pilgrim, as he looked up in his father’s or mother’s face, would

catch that serious and severe expression he saw there, and trot silently on, forgetting that he was fatigued.

"And here I was deeply impressed with the remarkable contour of many visages, which I had now a better opportunity of examining than while on the road. There seemed every description of guilt, and every degree of religious feeling, mingled together in the same mass, and all more or less subdued by the same principle of abrupt and gloomy abstraction.

"There was a little man, dressed in a turned black coat and drab cassimere small-clothes, who struck me as a remarkable figure; his back was long, his legs and thighs short, and he walked on the edge of his feet. He had a pale sorrowful face, with bags hung under his eyes, drooping eyelids, no beard, no brows, and no chin; for in the place of the two latter, there was a slight frown where the brows ought to have been, and a curve in the place of the chin, merely perceptible from the bottom of his under lip to his throat. He wore his own hair, which was a light bay, so that you could scarcely distinguish it from a wig. I was given to understand that he was a religious tailor, under three blessed orders.

"There was another round shouldered man, with black twinkling eyes, plump face, rosy cheeks, and nose twisted at the top. In this character humour appeared to be the predominant principle. He was evidently an original, and, I am sure, had the knack of turning the ludicrous side of every object towards him. His eye would roll about from one person to another, while fingering his beads, with an expression of humour, something like delight, beaming from his fixed steady countenance, and when anything that would have been particularly worthy of a joke met his glance, I could perceive a tremulous twinkle of the eye, intimating his inward enjoyment. I think still this jocular abstinence was to him the severest part of the pilgrimage. I asked him was he ever at the "island" before. He peered into my face with a look that infected me with risibily, without knowing why; shrugged up his shoulders, looked into the fire, and said 'no,' with a dry emphatic cough.

after it; as much as to say, you may apply my answer to the future as well as the past. Religion, I thought, was giving him up, or sent him here as a last resource. He spoke to nobody.

“A little behind the humourist sat a very tall, thin, important looking personage, dressed in a shabby black coat; there was a cast of severity and self-sufficiency in his face, which at once indicated him to be a man of office and authority, little accustomed to have his own will disputed. I was not wrong in my conjecture—he was a classical school-master, and was pompously occupied, when I first saw him, in reading through his spectacles, with his head raised aloft, the Seven Penitential Psalms in Latin, out of the Key of Paradise, to a circle of women and children, along with two or three men in frieze coats, who listened with profound attention.

“There were also other countenances in which a man might almost read the histories of their owners. Me thought I could perceive the lurking unsubdued spirit of the battered rake, in the leer of his roving eye, whilst he performed in the teeth of his flesh, blood, and principles, the rotten vow to which the shrinking spirit at the approach of death, on the bed of sickness, clung, as to its salvation; for it was evident that superstition only exacted from libertinism what fear and ignorance had promised her.

“I could note the selfish, griping miser, betraying his own soul and holding a false promise to his heart, as with lank jaw, keen eye, and brow knit with anxiety for the safety of his absent wealth, he joined some group, eager, if possible, to defraud them even of the benefit of their prayers, and attempting to practise that knavery upon heaven, which had been so successful upon earth.

“I could see the man of years, I thought, withering away under the disconsolation of an ill-spent life, old without peace, and grey without wisdom, flattering himself that he is religious because he prays, and making a merit of offering to God that which Satan has rejected; thinking, too, that he has withdrawn from sin because the ability of committing it has left him, and taking

credit for subduing his propensities, although they have only died in his nature.

" I could mark, too, I fancied, the stiff set features of the Pharisee, affecting to instruct others, that he might show his own superiority, and descanting on the merits of works, that his hearers might know he performed them himself.

" I could also observe the sly demure overdoings of the hypocrite, and mark the deceitful lines of grave meditation running along that part of his countenance where in others the front of honesty lies open and expanded. I could trace him when he got beyond his depth, where the want of sincerity in religion betrayed him into ignorance of its forms.

" I could note the scowling, sharp-visaged bigot, wrapt up in the nice observance of trifles, correcting others, if the object of their supplications embraced any thing within a whole hemisphere of heresy, and not so much happy because he thought himself *in* the way of salvation, as because he thought others *out* of it—a consideration which sent pleasure tingling to his fingers' end.

" But notwithstanding all this, I noticed, through the gloom of the place, many who were actuated by genuine, unaffected, piety, from whom charity and kindness beamed forth through all the disadvantages around them. Such people, for the most part, prayed in silence and alone. Whenever I saw a man or woman anxious to turn away their faces, and separate themselves from the flocks of gregarious mummers, I seldom failed to witness the outpouring of a contrite spirit. I have certainly seen, in several instances, the tear of heartfelt repentance bedew the sinner's cheek. I observed one peculiarly interesting female, who struck me very much. In personal beauty she was lovely—her form perfectly symmetrical, and she evidently belonged to rather a better order of society. Her dress was plain, though her garments were by no means common. She could scarcely be twenty, and yet her face told a tale of sorrow—of deep, wasting, desolate sorrow. As the prayers, hymns, and religious conversations which went on, were

peculiar to the place, time, and occasion—it being near the hour of rest—she probably did not feel that reluctance in going to pray in presence of so many which she otherwise would have felt. She kept her eye on a certain female who had a remote dusky corner to pray in, and the moment she retired from it, this young creature went up and there knelt down. But what a contrast to the calm, unconscious, and insipid mummery which went on at the moment through the whole room ! Her prayer was short, and she had neither books or beads ; but the heavings of her bosom and her suppressed sobs, sufficiently proclaimed her sincerity. Her petition, indeed, seemed to go to heaven from a broken heart. When it was finished, she remained a few moments on her knees, and dried her eyes with her handkerchief. As she rose up, I could mark the modest timid, glance, and the slight blush, as she presented herself again amongst the company, where all were strangers. I thought she appeared, though in the midst of such a number, to be wofully and pitifully alone.

“ As for my own companion, she absolutely made the grand tour of all the praying knots on the premises, having taken a very tolerable bout with each. There were two qualities in which she shone pre-eminent—voice and distinctness ; for she gave by far the loudest and most monotonous chaunt. Her visage also was remarkable, for her complexion resembled the dark, dingy red of a winter apple. She had a pair of very piercing black eyes, with which, while kneeling with her body thrown back upon her heels as if they were a cushion, she scrutinised, at her ease, every one in the room, rocking herself gently from side to side. The poor creature paid a marked attention to the interesting young woman I have just mentioned. At last, they dropped off, one by one, to bed, that they might be up early the next morning for the Lough ; with the exception of some half dozen, more long-winded than the rest, whose voices I could hear at their sixth rosary, in the rapid elevated tone peculiar to the Catholics, until I fell asleep.

" The next morning, when I awoke, I joined with all haste the aggregate crowds that proceeded in masses towards the lake—or Purgatory—which lies amongst the hills that extend to the north-east of Petigo. While ascending the bleak, hideous mountain range, whose ridge commands a full view of this celebrated scene of superstition, the manner and appearance of the pilgrims were deeply interesting.

" Although there could not be less than two hundred people, young and old, boys and girls, men and women, the hale and the sickly, the blind and the lame, all climbing to gain the top with as little delay as possible, yet was there scarcely a sound, certainly not a word to be heard among them. For my part, I plainly heard the palpitations of my heart, both loud and quick. Had I been told that the veil of eternity was about to be raised before me at that moment, I could scarcely have felt more intensely. Several females were obliged to rest for some time, in order to gain both physical and moral strength—one fainted; and several old men were obliged to sit down. All were praying—every crucifix was out—every bead in requisition; and nothing broke a silence so solemn, but a low, monotonous murmur of devotion; although, perhaps, at that moment there was not a single heart engaged in the prayers which the mouth was uttering.

" As soon as we ascended the hill, the whole scene was instantly before us: a large lake, surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, bleak, uncomfortable, and desolate. In the lake itself, about half a mile from the edge next us, was to be seen the 'island,' with two or three slated houses on it, naked and unplastered, as desolate looking almost as the mountains. A little range of exceeding low hovels, which the German dwarf could scarcely enter without stooping, appeared to the left; and the eye could rest on nothing more, except a living mass of human beings crawling slowly about, like worms on a dead dog. The first thing the pilgrim does, when he gets a sight of the lake, is to prostrate himself, kiss the earth, and then, on his knees, offer up three *Paters*

and *Aves*, for the favour of being permitted to see this blessed place. When this is over, he descends to the lake, and, after paying sixpence to the ferryman, is rowed over to the purgatory. When the whole view was presented to me, I stood for some time to contemplate it; and I cannot better illustrate the reaction which took place in my mind, than by saying that it resembles that awkward inversion which a man's proper body experiences, when, on going to pull something from which he expects a marvellous resistance, it comes with him at a touch, and the natural consequence is, that he finds his head down, and his heels up.

“ Still, however, there was nothing except my idea of its external appearance disappointed; I accordingly descended with the rest, and, in a short time, found myself among the living mass upon the island. The first thing I did was to hand over my three cakes of oaten bread, which I had got made in Petigo, tied up in a handkerchief, as well as my hat and second shirt, to the care of the owner of one of the huts; having first, by the way, undergone a second prostration on touching the island, and greeted it with fifteen holy kisses, and another string of prayers. I, then, according to the regulations, should commence the stations, lacerated as my feet were after so long a journey; so that I had not a moment to rest. Think, therefore, what I must have suffered, on surrounding a large chapel, in the direction of from east to west, along a pavement of stone spikes, every one of them making its way along my nerves and muscles to my unfortunate brain. I was absolutely stupid and dizzy with the pain, the praying, the justling, the elbowing, the scrambling, and the uncomfortable penitential whining of the whole crowd. I knew not what I was about, but went through the forms in the same mechanical dead spirit which pervaded all present.”

Having thus narrated the entire proceedings in the island, the writer observes—“ When I commenced my station I started from what is called the ‘Beds,’ and God help St. Patrick if he lay upon them: they are

sharp stones, placed circularly in the earth, with the spike ends of them up, one circle within another; and the manner in which the pilgrim gets as far as the innermost, resembles precisely that in which school-boys enter the walls of Troy upon their slates. I moved away from these upon the sharp stones with which the whole island is surfaced, keeping the Chapel or 'Prison' as it is called, upon my right; then turning, I came round again, with a *circumbendibus*, to the spot from which I set out. During this circuit, as well as I can remember, I *repeated* fifty-five *paters* and *aves*, and five creeds, or five decades; and be it known, that the fifty prayers were *offered up* to the Virgin Mary, and the odd five to God! I then commenced getting round the external beds, during which I *repeated*, I think, fifteen *paters* and *aves* more; and as the beds decreased in circumference, the prayers decreased in length, until a short circuit and three *paters* and *aves* finished the last and innermost of these blessed couches.

"At last night came; but here to describe the horrors of what I suffered I hold myself utterly inadequate. I was wedged in a truckle bed with seven others, one of whom was a Scotch Papist—another a man with a shrunk leg, who wore a crutch—all afflicted with that disease which northern men that feed on oatmeal are liable to; and then swarms that fell upon my poor young skin, and probed, and stung, and fed on me!—it was pressure and persecution almost insupportable, and yet such was my fatigue, that sleep even here began to weigh down my eyelids.

"I was just on the point of enjoying a little rest, when a man ringing a large hand bell, came round, crying out in a low, supernatural groan, which could be heard double the distance of the loudest shout—'waken up, waken up, and come to prison.' The words were no sooner out of his mouth, than there was a sudden start, and a general scramble in the dark for our respective garments.

"After having washed ourselves in the dark waters of the lake, we entered this famous 'prison,' which is only

a naked, unplastered chapel, with an altar against one of the side walls, and two galleries. On entering this place, a scene presented itself altogether unparalleled on the earth, and in every point of view capable to sustain the feelings raised in the mind by the midnight scenery of the lake as seen during the ablutions. The prison was full, but not crowded; for had it been crowded, we would have been happy. It was, however, just sufficiently filled to give every individual the pleasure of sustaining himself, without having it in his power to recline, for a moment, in an attitude of rest, or to change that most insupportable of all bodily sufferings, uniformity of position. There we knelt upon a hard ground floor, and commenced praying;—and again I must advert to the policy which prevails in this island.—During the period of imprisonment there are no prescribed prayers nor ceremonies whatever to be performed, and this is the more strange, as every other stage of the station has its proper devotions. But these are suspended here, lest the attention of the prisoners might be fixed on any particular object, and the supernatural character of drowsiness imputed to the place, be thus doubted—they are, therefore, turned in without any thing to excite them to attention, or to resist the propensity to sleep occasioned by their fatigue and want of rest. Having thus nothing to do—nothing to sustain—nothing to stimulate them, it is very natural that they should, even if exhausted by previous lassitude, be inclined to sleep—but every thing that can weigh them down is laid upon them in this heavy and oppressive superstition, that the strong delusion may be kept up. On entering the prison I was struck with the dim religious twilight of the place. Two candles gleamed faintly from the altar, and there was something I thought of a deadly light about them, as they burned feebly and stilly against the darkness which hung over the other part of the building. Two priests, facing the congregation, stood upon the altar in silence, with pale spectral visages, their eyes catching an unearthly glare from the sepulchral light of the slender tapers. But that which was strangest of all, and as I said before, without parallel in this world, was

the impression and effect produced by the deep, drowsy, hollow, hoarse, guttural, ceaseless, and monotonous *hum*, which proceeded from about four hundred individuals half asleep, and at prayer; for their cadences were blended and slurred into each other, as they repeated, in an awe-struck and earnest under tone, the prayers in which they were engaged. It was certainly the strangest and most supernatural-like sound I ever heard, and resembled a thousand subterraneous groans, uttered in a kind of low, deep, unvaried chant. Nothing could produce a sense of gloomy alarm in a weak superstitious mind equal to this; and it derived much of its wild and singular character, as well as of its lethargic influence, from its continuity; for it still—still rung lowly and supernaturally on my ear. Perhaps the deep, wavy prolongation of the bass of a large cathedral bell, or that low, continuous sound, which is distinct from its higher and louder intonations, would give a faint notion of it—yet only a faint one; for the body of hoarse monotony here was immense. Indeed, such a noise had something so powerfully lulling, that human nature, even excited by the terrible suggestions of superstitious fear, was scarcely able to withstand it.

“ Now the poor pilgrims forget, that this strong disposition to sleep arises from the weariness produced by their long journeys—by the exhausting penance of the station, performed without giving them time to rest—by the other natural consequence of not giving them time to sleep—by the drowsy darkness of the chapel—and by the heaviness caught from the low peculiar murmur of the pilgrims, which would of itself overcome the lightest spirit. I was here but a very short time when I began to doze, and just as my chin was sinking placidly on my breast, and the words of an *Ave Maria* dying upon my lips, I felt the charm all at once broken by a well-meant rap upon the occiput, conferred through the instrumentality of a little angry-looking squat urchin of sixty years, and a remarkably good blackthorn cudgel, which, along with its owner, was engaged in thwacking the heads of such sinners as, not having the dread of insanity and the

regulations of the place before their eyes, were inclined to sleep. I declare the knock I received told to such a purpose on my head, that nothing occurred during the pilgrimage that vexed me so much. I experienced also that singular state of being, in which, while the senses are accessible to the influence of surrounding objects, the process of thought is suspended, and man seems to enjoy an inverted existence, in which the soul sleeps, and the body remains awake and susceptible of external impressions. I once thought I was washing myself in the lake, and that the dashing noise of its waters rang in my ears : I also fancied myself at home in conversation with my friends ; yet, in neither case, did I altogether forget where I was. Still in struggling to bring my mind back, so paramount was the dread of awaking deranged should I fall asleep, that these occasional visions—associating themselves with this terror—and this again broken in upon by the hoarse murmurs about me, throwing their dark shade on every object that passed through my imagination, the force of reason being too vague at the moment ;—these occasional visions, I say, and this jumbling together of broken images and disjointed thoughts had such an effect upon me, that I imagined several times, that the awful penalty was exacted, and that my reason was gone for ever. I frequently started, and on seeing two dim lights upon the altar, and on hearing the ceaseless and eternal murmurs going on—going on—around me, without being immediately able to ascribe them to their proper cause, I set myself down as a lost man : for on that terror I was provokingly clear during the whole night. I more than once gave an involuntary groan or shriek, on finding myself in this singular state ; so did many others, and these groans and shrieks were wildly and fearfully contrasted with the never ending hum, which, like the ceaseless noise of a distant waterfall, went on during the night. The perspiration occasioned by this inconceivable distress, by the heat of the place, and by the unchangeableness of my position, flowed profusely from every pore. About two o'clock in the morning an unhappy young man, either in a state of lethargic indif-

ference, or under the influence of these sudden "paroxysms, threw himself, or fell from one of the galleries, and was so shattered by the fall, that he died next day at twelve o'clock, and, what was not so much to the credit of the reverend gentry of the island, without the benefit of the clergy; for I saw a priest with his stole and box of chrism finishing off his extreme unction when he was quite dead. I have always thought that act to be one of the most degrading to human reason, and impious in the sight of God, of any I ever witnessed of a religious nature. The under jaw of the corpse hung down, his eyes were open, and stared with the wild glassy look of death, his nostrils were distended and filled with mucus, his hair was on end, and about his brows and the upper part of his face, lay the froth of the perspiration which exuded in the agonies of death. * * * *

The fall of this young man drove the sleep from the eyes of some of us, but had very little effect upon the crowd, for the situation of each was too fearfully critical, to admit of any consideration beyond it.

"In this prison, during the night, several persons go about with rods and staves, rapping those on the head whom they see heavy; snuff boxes also go round very freely, elbows are jogged, chins cracked, and ears twitched, for the purpose of keeping each other awake. The rods and staves are frequently changed from hand to hand, and I thought it would be a lucky job, if I could get one for a little to enable me to change my position. I accordingly asked a man who had been a long time banging in this manner, if he would allow me to take his place for some time, and he was civil enough to do so. I therefore set out on my travels through the prison, rapping about me at a great rate, and with remarkable effect; for, whatever was the cause of it, I perceived that not a soul seemed the least inclined to doze after a visit from me; on the contrary, I observed several to scratch their heads, giving me at the same time looks of very sincere thankfulness.

"But what I am convinced was the most meritorious act of my whole pilgrimage, as it was certainly the most

zealously performed, was a remembrance I gave the squat fellow who visited me in the early part of the night. He was engaged, tooth and nail, with another man at a *de profundis*, and although not asleep at the time, yet on the principle that prevention is better than cure, I thought it more prudent to let him have his rap, before the occasion for it might come: he accordingly got full payment at compound interest, for the villainous knock he had *lent* me before.

“ When morning came, the blessed light of the sun broke the leaden charm of the prison, and infused into us a wonderful portion of fresh vigour. This day being the second of our arrival, we had our second station to perform, and consequently all the sharp spikes to retrace. We were not permitted at all to taste food during these twenty-four hours, so that our weakness was very great. I beg leave, however, to return my special acknowledgments for the truly hospitable allowance of *wine*, with which I, in common with every other pilgrim, was treated. This wine is made by filling a large pot with the lake water, and making it lukewarm. It is then handed round in jugs and wooden noggins, to their credit be it recorded, in the greatest possible abundance. On this alone I breakfasted, dined, and supped, during the second or prison day of my pilgrimage. At twelve o’clock that night we left prison, and made room for another squadron, who gave us their kennels. Such a luxury was sleep to me, however, that I felt not the slightest inconvenience from the vermin, though I certainly made a point to avoid the Scotchman and the cripple. On the following day I confessed, and never was an unfortunate soul so grievously afflicted with a bad memory as I was on that occasion—the whole thing altogether, but particularly the prison scene, had knocked me up. I could not, therefore, remember a tithe of my sins; and the Priest, poor man, had really so much to do, and was in such a hurry, that he had me clean absolved, before I had got half through the preface. I then went with a fresh batch to receive the sacrament.

“ On the third day I was determined, if possible, to

leave it early: so I performed my third and last station round the chapel and the beds, reduced to such a state of weakness and hunger, that the coats of my stomach must have been rubbing against each other; my feet were quite shapeless. I therefore made the shortest circuit and longest strides possible, until I finished it."

Having thus narrated the entire proceedings in the island, the writer observes—

"I verily think, that if mortification of the body, without conversion of the life or heart—if penance and not repentance *could* save the soul, no wretch who performed a pilgrimage here, could with a good grace be damned. Out of hell the place is matchless, and if there *be* a purgatory in the other world, it may very well be said, there is a fair rehearsal of it in the county of Donegal in Ireland!"

"Let us consider the nature of this pilgrimage: it must be performed on foot, no matter what the distance of residence (allowing for voyages)—the condition of the life, age, or the sex of the pilgrim may be. Individuals from France, America, England and Scotland visit it—as voluntary devotees, or to perform an act of penance for some great crime—or perhaps to atone for a bad life in general. It is performed, too, in the dead heat of summer when travelling on foot is most fatiguing: the poor creatures arrive, therefore, without a single exception, blown and jaded almost to death. The first thing they do, notwithstanding this, is to commence the fresh rigours of the station, which occupies them several hours. This consists in what I have already described, viz. the pleasant promenade upon the stony spikes around the prison and the 'beds'; that over, they take their first and only meal for the day; after which, as in my own case, just related, they must huddle themselves in clusters, on what is barefacedly called a bed, but which is nothing more nor less than a beggarman's 'shake down,' where the smell, the heat, the filth, and above all, the vermin, are into-

lerable to the very farthest stretch of the superlative degree. As soon as their eyes begin to close here, they are roused by the bell-man, and summoned at the hour of twelve—first washing themselves as aforesaid, in the lake, and then adjourning to the prison; and what think you is the impression under which they enter it? one indeed, which, when we consider their bodily weakness and mental excitement, must do its work with success. It is this: that as soon as they enter the prison, a *supernatural* tendency to sleep will come over them, which, they say, is peculiar to the place; that this is an emblem of the influence of sin over the soul, and a type of their future fate: that if they resist this, they will be saved; but that if they yield to it, they will not only be damned to the flames of hell in the next world, but will go mad in this. Is it any wonder that a weak mind and exhausted body, wrought upon by these fiendish bugbears, should induce upon itself, by its own terrors, the malady of derangement? We know that nothing acts so strongly and so fatally upon reason, as an imagination diseased by religious terrors; and I regret to say, that I had upon that night an opportunity of witnessing a fatal instance of it.

“There is not on earth, with the exception of pagan rites,—and it is melancholy to be compelled to compare any institution of the Christian religion* with a Jugger-naut—there is not on earth, I say, a regulation of a religious nature, more barbarous and inhuman than this. It has destroyed thousands since its establishment—has left children without parents, and parents childless. It has made wives widows, and torn from the disconsolate husband the mother of his children; and is itself the monster which St. Patrick is said to have destroyed in the place—a monster, which is a complete and significant allegory of this great and destructive superstition. But what is even worse than death, by stretching the powers

* Query—Is Mr. Carleton correct in saying that the superstitions he refers to are any institution of the Christian Religion? Certainly not.—ED.

of human sufferance until the mind cracks under them, it is said sometimes to return these pitiable creatures maniacs—exulting in the laugh of madness, or sunk for ever in the incurable apathy of religious melancholy. I mention this now, to exhibit the cunning with which these calamities are turned to account, and the knavery which is exercised over these poor, unsuspecting people, in consequence of their occurrence.

“ There is no such practical philosopher—no such unrivalled politician—as the Church of Rome. Her doctrines, if properly examined, are nothing but human nature delineated. She exhibits one of the most admirable systems which the world ever saw, or ever will see, for strengthening in the mind of man, whatever is calculated to render him satisfied with her authority. She has also contrived to exercise that authority over him through the means of those faculties which turn whatever they touch into pleasure; so that, according to her economy, the most base and shameful degradations are elevated into a fictitious dignity, by superinducing upon the heart of the votary motives which give a syren music to the spirit, and smooth that path which he once believed to be the rugged one. This is really her secret: she teaches her followers to believe, that the way on which they advance, if they observe her ceremonies, is the difficult path which leads to happiness; and whilst those who observe their progress think them travelling on a path of thorns, they themselves believe it to be one of flowers. It was amazing to observe the vigour and perseverance with which feeble, sickly old creatures performed the necessary austerities of this dreadful pilgrimage; creatures, who, if put to the same fatigue, on any other business, would at once sink under it; but the motive supplied energy, and the infirmities of nature borrowed new strength from the deep and ardent devotion of the spirit.

“ As for that solemn, humble, and heartful sense of God’s presence, which Christian prayer demands, its existence in the mind would not only be a moral, but physical impossibility in Lough Dergh.—Salvation, as

offered in the word of God, and the simple unencumbered views of man's fallen nature, and of God's mercy in enabling him by faith in Christ to raise himself from his natural state of sin, do not belong to the place. If these doctrines were known, salvation would not be made, as in the present instance, to depend on locality. There is nothing there but rosaries to the blessed Virgin—prayers and litanies to dead men and women, called saints—acts of faith, hope, and charity, economically *performed* by repeating them from memory, or by reading them from books. There is confession, penance to the eyes, and *repetition* of prayers; but seldom repentance or prayer. As I said before, they could not be felt here. But if it be not calculated to excite religion in the heart, it is right well adapted to delude the sinner; and in a church which, contrary to reason and Scripture, ascribes merit in the sight of God to human works, it is no wonder that it has attained such eminence.....

..... “Oh, Romanism ! Romanism ! the blood of millions is upon you—you have your popes, your priests, your friars, your nuns, your monks, your hermits, your hair, your teeth, your nails, your garments, your blessed buttons, your rotten bones, your bits of wood, your gold, your ivory, your pictures, your scapulars, your cords, your candles, your ashes, your salt, your water, your charms, your exorcisms, your wafers, your masses, your penance, your indulgences, your fasts, your feasts, your jubilees, your oils, your absolutions, your confessions, your floating funds of good works in this life, to be sold out to the credulous to relieve them from imaginary purgatories in the next; you have your visionary lies, and your lying visions, your dreams and your raptures, your miracles, your holy wells, your blessed graves, and your Lough-derghs, you have all these, but you have not Christ—these form the great idol which you have set up in his stead, these are the ‘strong delusion,’ the ‘lie’ which you are given to believe, and yet you call yourself the Church of Christ ! Did Christ speak truth when he declared that there was no way unto the Father but by *Him* ? that *He* is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life* ? These

words contain the awful sentence of your condemnation—in them you hear the eternal voice of God against you. You stand, therefore, between them and your people—you wrap that guide from which you have departed, in darkness, lest it should testify against you—lest the people whom you have led astray should find ~~their~~ error and return to the truth—lest they should perceive, that, like the Pharisee, whilst you have pretended to them to have the word of God as your standard, you have made it of ‘none effect by your traditions.’ But the day is coming—is already come—when the imposture of the priest, and the lie of the man, shall both be tried and detected by the word of God.”

FICTITIOUS LOUGH DEARG IN THE CHAPEL OF MONEA, DIOCESE OF CLOGHER.

In the latter end of 1816, the Rev. J. M., Roman Catholic Priest of the united parishes of Devenish, Bohoe, and part of Innis M’Saint, diocese of Clogher, died. His Curate, the Rev. J. D. being much esteemed, was considered by his parishioners as a proper person to succeed him, and in justice entitled to the living. The Bishop resisted their desire and application, and presented the Rev. N. S. with the Parish. The Parishioners, with some of their Protestant neighbours, petitioned the Bishop in favour of Mr. D. but without effect. Finding that argument and remonstrance were insufficient, they proceeded in a body to the residence of Mr. D. where he had been removed by his Bishop, mounted him on his horse, whether a volunteer or not, I shall not say, and guarded him in triumph to his old friends in Devenish.—Among these he remained in opposition to his Diocesan, the Rev. Dr. M.—. In the following summer, when the poor ignorant Roman Catholic hastened or was driven to Lough Dearg, to do penance for his sins, the Rev. Doctor M—, interdicted any of Mr. D.’s flock from being received in that island. At

this period, Mr. D.'s ingenuity was particularly discovered. The Chapel of Monea where he officiated was large, and favourable to his project. A large hole was made in the floor, and filled with water, as a representation of the holy lake, and several crucifixes were suspended in suitable places on the wall of the Chapel, and stations were commenced, and penances performed in it, as fully answering all the purposes of will worship, and Popish discipline. Mr. D.'s opposition to his superiors, though exposed to their anathemas, fully evinces, that he was a man of great judgment and firmness of mind. He was shortly after presented by his Bishop with a Parish equally as valuable as Devenish.

It may not be uninteresting to remark, that Mr. M., rector to Mr. D. was much beloved by his hearers, and by many of the Protestants of the parish of Devenish, owing to the many *miracles* he performed !! Some looked on him literally as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, but his skill among the brute creation, and his readiness to give charms and holy water, failed not to endear him to the superstitious Roman Catholic, and ignorant Protestant. One particular act of good-natured weakness, Mr. M. undertook and performed much to the satisfaction of the poor deluded Protestant who entreated his supernatural agency. A. J. had a horse of great value given to him, that refused to eat some oats; he got alarmed, but hearing of Mr. M.'s skill, he applied to him for advice. This Rev. gentleman at first appeared unwilling to interfere, at length he gave the following prescription (I should have mentioned that he would not order any thing unless a Roman Catholic was present, who might be convinced of his power)—“ You are to take this paper, on which is written a verse of Scripture; and to have it sewn in either the mane or the tail of the horse by one *of my sort*, (that is, of the Holy Roman Catholic Church). A Protestant must not attempt doing this.” The horse recovered, whether by this charm, or by the use of some medicine, I shall leave to others to determine. T. K.

We cannot permit the circumstance of a Roman

Catholic priest constructing a fictitious Lough Dearg in his Chapel for the use of his people, when prevented going to the real one, to pass without a word or two of remark. The Priest who did this, had regularly, at former periods, allowed such of his flock as desired it, to incur the fatigue and expense necessarily attendant upon making a journey of many miles to that place of supposed sanctity, Lough Dearg. But when his Bishop forbade their admission there, he makes forsooth a hole in his Chapel floor, fills it with water, sticks crucifixes around, and tells them that they may wash there, and be as clean every whit as at the other. In one or other then of these he must have been a deceiver. Either there was no superior efficacy in the lake-water, &c. so in permitting them to toil and labour to it, he suffered them to incur most unnecessary bodily inflictions, or else there really was, and so in passing the water of his puddle-hole upon them for a substitute, he put a plain cheat upon them. We speak here, judging this man's conduct as a Roman Catholic might judge it, who believes in the peculiar sacredness of some places above others, and that the washing in particular water, or saying prayers and doing penances at particular places, are profitable for cleansing the soul from sin.

It is ignorance alone which supports the idea so unhappily propagated by the Church of Rome, that rocks, and wells, and caves, and lakes, afford peculiar facilities of approach to the throne of grace; need we then wonder that the Romish Laity are studiously kept in darkness? for by the light of Scripture how many profitable delusions would at once be dissipated.

ANOTHER FICTITIOUS LOUGH DEARG, CORONEA, COUNTY CAVAN.

A little tract, that bears the title of " Hindooism in Ireland," notices a Station which was some time since established at Coronea, bounty of Cavan :

A few devotees, not satisfied with an annual pilgrimage to Loughderg, commenced similar rounds to those which are performed there, in the chapel of Coronea, county Cavan. They cut circles in the chapel floor; and chalked figures on the walls, in imitation of the beds, crosses, altars, stones, &c. at Loughderg, giving names accordingly to each circle and to each mark on the wall, and appointing the same number of prayers, bowings, crossings, &c. to be practised at each, that were enjoined at such parts of the station at Loughderg, as each circle or mark might be designed to represent.

The plan of this station is described as follows:— A large painted wooden cross is hung on the chapel wall, to the right of the altar. Three circles are marked on the chapel floor also on the right; and as many on the left side of the same altar, with a large circle dedicated to St. Patrick, in the centre of the building. The other circles are called after Sts. Brennan, Catherine, Bridget, Columb, Avit, and Blossett. There is a stone on the right of the altar, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and pictures are hung at short distances on the walls of the chapel, representing the different stages of our Lord's crucifixion; at each of which a certain number of Pater Nosters, &c. must be repeated. Every pilgrim strips off his hat, shoes, and stockings, before he enters the chapel; and on entering the door must *fancy* that he is entering the holy island of Loughderg. After various ceremonies, he is to put his shoulder to the wooden cross, and *fancying* that he takes it up, he must suppose that he carries it with him while he goes seven times round the walls of the Chapel inside; in imitation of the manner in which Jericho was encompassed by the Israelites. He then goes round the different circles, some five, some seven times; inside and outside: sometimes walking, and at other times performing his circuits on his knees. He then repairs to the stone dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in approaching which, though still on the dry chapel floor, he must *imagine* that he is wading through the water of Loughderg, under the idea of drowning his sins in this imaginary water, as Moses did

his enemies in the Red Sea.—These, with a variety of evolutions, prayers, &c. too numerous to be mentioned, complete what is termed a *station*: three of these stations must be performed every day of his pilgrimage, which continues for three, six, and even nine days and a night. During all this time the pilgrim takes but a single meal of bread and water each day. Here too, as at Loughderg, he must *fancy* that the water which he drinks is changed into wine.

On the last day and night of his superstitious performances, the pilgrim must neither eat, drink, nor sleep. He goes through all the prayers of the preceding days; but does not move from his position while doing so, either standing or kneeling in the one spot; and yet, fancying all the time that he is moving round the beds, &c. at Loughderg. A person who acts as prompter to the company, repeating at each set of prayers, "Now we go round St. Bridget's bed, now we go round St. Anne's circle, &c." On this day all the pilgrims are driven into one end of the chapel; and the clerk calls the roll specifying the sum paid by each. Every pilgrim on answering "here" must march to the opposite end of the chapel. By this discipline, which forcibly reminds us of the methods taken on board the Liverpool Packets, to collect the passage money from the deck and steerage passengers, a considerable sum is secured to the treasury of the church. At the very lowest calculation, in *nine* days the priest may receive the sum of *forty* pounds.

An idea may be formed of the *unreasonable* nature of this service, from the calculation that each pilgrim repeats every day of his pilgrimage, 530 Paters, 1457 Hail Mary's, 135 Gloria Patris, and about 42 Creeds. Who can hear without regret, that in one year, upwards of *nine hundred* immortal beings—our fellow countrymen—went through this unmeaning drudgery, and under so barefaced an imposition upon credulity, were led to spend their *money* for that which is not bread, and their *labour* for that which satisfieth not.

STATION AT HOLY ISLAND.

An eye-witness has furnished the following account of the practices at a Station held on Whitsunday, at Holy Island, in Scariff Bay, on the river Shannon:

It is lamentable to consider the extent to which idolatry, attended by its inseparable concomitants, still prevails in this benighted country. At Whitsuntide last, I visited the famous island in Scariff Bay, called HOLY ISLAND. On it stands the remains of some ancient buildings much revered for their antiquity. There are many legendary tales told there about the holiness of the place, and the miracles which have been performed in it. They tell you "the churches were all built in one night, and that the tower would have been built up to heaven but some woman unfortunately said, how high do you intend to build this?" At this place St. Patrick stopped the first night he came to bless Ireland, and the Virgin Mary came down to meet him in this abode of bliss. Here, the sound of the Vesper bell is heard, which sounds in heaven every seven years.

The practical tendency of this credulity is very bad—it leads to the worst consequences. For as regularly as the season of Whitsuntide comes, here you find a concourse of people assembled to perform penance. They make 280 rounds, the circumference of some being a mile, others half a mile, till they are gradually diminished to a circuit of the church of St. Mary's. All of them are considered trifling in comparison to the last, for this is performed on the naked knees through a heap of rugged stones; the females tuck up their clothes, and expose their persons in the most indelicate manner. Men of the most dissolute morals go to witness this part of the exhibition, but none can witness the *finale* without feelings of the greatest horror being excited; when it comes to this, all must (without assistance) descend on the naked knees, a step nearly a foot in depth. This is a most painful operation. The writhing postures, the intense agonies, and the lacerated knees of the votaries

are most distressing to the spectators. After the descent they must go on their bleeding knees through the rough stones in the church to the east end, when in a posture of most profound reverence, they kiss a particular stone.* No doubt, the supposed efficacy which they believe to be in this fatiguing and excruciating punishment, must be very great. On inquiring what they supposed it to be, some said, "they went there to perform the vows made during their sickness if they recovered," or as proxies for others. This they say is but small in comparison of the benefits they have received, and it is the least recompense they can make. One poor man told me "his brother intended to perform this penance, but death prevented him, and he came to release his brother's soul from purgatory." I asked him if he was advised by any one to do this, he said "yes, his clergy, but he had his doubt about the good of it, for he never saw one of them there." A woman in the employment of a gentleman residing near the place, who is well known for honour, truth, and respectability, made a vow that if she would recover from her sickness, to go her rounds at the Holy Island. She came there in a delicate state of health, and having attempted to perform her promise, she was obliged from weakness to give it up, but that the penance might be completed, she sent her son to perform the rest for her.

There are others who go there to make atonement for their sins, and among this class of the superstitious,

* This shows us what efforts the guilty mind of man (ignorant of the nature and extent of sin, and of the one only sufficient atonement for it,) will make to deceive itself into a false and fatal security; whether at home or abroad, the effects of this ignorance are ever the same; and the reader can hardly peruse the above without being reminded of the wonderful penances performed by the votaries of false religion in distant countries. O that the Lord would make our benighted countrymen spiritually acquainted with the Atonement of His blessed Son; with what abhorrence would they then turn away from these abominations!

you generally find all the abandoned females of the country. When the penance is finished, the grossness of the language used is most disgusting. They tell you the demerit of sin cannot be more than the punishment they underwent—the penance will take away the guilt, and *some whiskey* will wash away the remembrance of it.

When the work of penance is finished, all repair to the tents, the drinking then commences, and in the evening the island is more like the ancient Cyprus, when dedicated to Venus, than a place to which the frequenter of it ascribe holiness. It is polluted with drunken revels and the most gross debauchery.

CROAGH PATRICK, COUNTY MAYO.

Croagh Patrick is a very high and beautiful mountain in the most western part of the County of Mayo; it rises from the sea in a fine conical or sugar-loaf form. This mountain is considered to be one of the most holy places of pilgrimage in Ireland; it would fill a volume to tell all the fabulous and superstitious stories which are reported and believed about it—but its supposed holiness is derived from its being the place where St. Patrick is said to have driven all the venomous animals, which he banished from Ireland into the sea; a pilgrimage to it is, therefore, supposed to be of powerful efficacy to atone for and wash away sin. The penance done there is thus performed:—They begin their station at the sign of St. Patrick's knee, and there say seven paters, seven aves, and a creed; and go on their knees about the length of four perches, over rocks, until they get to a little altar, where they say fifteen paters, fifteen aves, and a creed; they then return, but still on their knees, and say seven paters, seven aves, and a creed. Thus ends their labour, unless they be married persons who have no children; [the additional rites belonging

to such persons we shall not detail ;] after which they go down the mountain to the well of glass. There they sit up all night, and bring thither the blind, the halt, and the maimed, presenting them to the saint of the well, and cry to him to deliver them all from their diseases and infirmities. They sit up three nights, to wit, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and next proceed to Aughawale, where they go through a station : and then enter the well, in which are three trouts ; they pick up baits and throw them into the water, and it is the most lucky omen in the world to them if a trout come out and eat the bait, but, if not, they cry out to St. Columbkill to send them out ; if they do not appear, there is some misfortune to come upon them, with the loss of friends and relations. If among the multitudes that come here there be any in war with their neighbours, they take up a flag which they call St. Columbkill's slate ; this they turn upside down in the name of that saint, and then return home and fast fifteen days, taking nothing but bread and water once in the twenty-four hours : this they do in honour of St. Columbkill, and to induce him to put the person or persons who have injured them to death. But if that does not do, they return to the well again, and go round their station about it backwards, and turn the flag upside down again. If stormy weather happen, either in spring or harvest, the whole country will say that it was because Columbkill's slate was turned, and they will even watch in harvest to prevent the people from turning it.

They next proceed to AUGHAGOUR, where there is another well : after which the pilgrims go St. Patrick's bed, where there are two old trees. It is awful to see the condition of these when the station is over. The people cut off their hair, both men and women, and take horse-shoes and brogue-nails, pins and needles, and fasten them to the trees ; they also cut up their clothes, be they ever so new, and tie them to these trees, lest on the day of judgment the Almighty should forget that they came there, and in order that the tokens should

be known, when St. Patrick would lay them before the tribunal.

They next proceed to LOUGHARROW. This lake is in the centre of a shaking bog, and within five or six miles of Balla ; to this lake they bring large pieces of butter, and throw them therein to the saint of the lake, praying him to save their cattle that year. Here they have pipers and fiddlers, and tents of every description, in which whiskey is sold, and they dance round the lake, and drink whiskey. Here parties, and families, and parishes come to fight and quarrel ; here also all manner of debaucheries are committed, and young persons are corrupted. In the end, they all bring home bottles of the lake water, and shake it among their cattle ; and, if any person become sick, some of it is spilled into his ears.

The following account of the same place of pilgrimage and penance, is extracted from a work recently published by the Rev. James Page, entitled 'Ireland : its evils traced to their Source :'

"About a mile and a quarter from the top of the hill, lives a man named Malley, who keeps a chapel of ease for the pilgrims, who resort thither from various parts of Ireland, to atone for their sins, or the sins of their parents and friends. Every devotee lays in a store of the heavenly liquor, from a pint to half a pint, according to their several abilities, with some oaten bread and butter ; together with taking a glass or two in the house. They then proceed as quick as possible to wipe out the nicks of their tally, and make a clear conscience, that they may enjoy, as they say, part of the fun which is below. They go up the hill barefooted, for it is counted a sin to go up otherwise ; and because I and two others went up with our shoes on, they immediately cried out that we were Sammies (meaning Protestants). The station commences at a place called

Leaca Menaan — in English, the kid's monument. When the pilgrims reach thus far, they bare their knees, and cross themselves ; kneel down, and face a wooden cross which stands in the centre of the monument. The station course here is about forty-five yards in circumference. Some go round this station on their knees, fancying that thereby they become more holy, and that God is indebted to them, in proportion to their sufferings.

“ The number of prayers said are, seven paters, seven aves, and a creed. They go round the monument seven times ; and at each round, they bow to the cross. When done their rounds, they come to where they began, throw themselves on their knees, and creep to the cross, which stands in the centre of the monument. They have about fifteen yards to go on their bare knees on heaps of sharp stones. Scarcely do they proceed two yards, when their knees are all stript of skin ; and before they reach the centre of their devotion, the streams of blood are visible. When they reach the adored idol of their soul, they cross themselves with the greatest reverence, then say some prayers, then kiss the transverse pieces of wood, and tie a small shred of their clothes on this cross, as an offering to the saint ; indeed, there are so many shreds of so many colours, that the cross appears like a scare-crow set up in the corn field to keep away the crows from destroying the grain. In this place there were about 250 persons at their devotion.

“ After this station is over, they then proceed to the top of the peak, which is about 900 yards ; and in this ascent, you might as well walk on a pavement of oyster-shells with their sharp edges up : and so enthusiastic are they in their devotions, that you never hear them complain. When they reach the top, every pilgrim who can afford it, takes another glass and then proceeds to prayer. On a flag on the top is the sign, as tradition says, of St. Patrick's knees ; but it appears more like a hole scooped out by a mason. However, here lies the rub, to see who would have the honour of kneeling in

the fancied knee-print of the saint. Here may be seen a species of diabolical delusion, which in truth may be called Irish Molochism. On their bare knees they say seven paters, seven aves, and a creed, in the place where it is supposed the saint performed his morning devotions. They proceed from thence, on their knees, to the altar, which is a rude heap of stones, about twenty yards distance from the place where they first kneel. This altar stands at the end of a small hut, about twenty feet long, and ten or eleven feet broad. To this they creep on their bare knees, bleeding as they proceed. Every knee-print is marked with blood. When they reach the altar, by paying a penny to the clerk, they get leave to kiss the precious furniture of the altar, which consists of a small wooden crucifix, and a piece of sheet iron folded together. These, the crafty clerk tells the poor creatures, are the relics of St. Patrick. To the bell is ascribed a great deal of virtue: any person kissing it, is said to be freed from mortal sin.

“ When done at the altar, they proceed to the second principal station, which is about twenty yards distance from the altar—say the same number of prayers—then, as at the first, they begin to go round the circular space of the long station, which is 400 yards in circumference. This they go round fifteen times, each time saying a Pater, Ave, and a Creed. Any persons who wish to save themselves the whole number of rounds, or who have committed more sin than an ordinary station can account for, go the whole round on their bare knees. I have seen four persons go round in this manner, and three of them women; and although at every step fresh streams of blood gushed out of their lacerated knees, not one word of murmuring escaped their lips. There is another station on the north side, called Patrick’s bed. All the devotees do not go there—none but those that are barren: and the abominable practices committed there, ought to make human nature, in its most degraded state, blush. This station course is forty yards in circumference. Round this they go seven times; then enter the bed, turn round seven times, take

up some small pebbles, and bring them home, in order to prevent barrenness, and to banish rats and mice. The greater part of those who go through this station, stop upon the hill all night, that they may sleep in the bed. When done on the top, they proceed to another place called Relic Murrah, at the distance of 1100 yards on the declivity of the western side.

“At the relic are three small monuments, each thirty yards in circumference. At each of these, the say seven Paters, seven Aves, and a Creed; then go round the circular space seven times. Seven times this space is four hundred yards. This finishes the station on the rick: but they have another call at Malley’s which puts the topstone upon the building, and plainly proves, that among Irish matrons are to be found many more extravagant than English Johanna. Well, as soon as they are provided with plenty of that juice which Patrick found so useful to him in his gambling match with the serpent, they are refreshed; and all those who have paid off their debts, take a room for themselves, where they have both a fiddler and piper to play for them. There you may behold men and women with their lacerated feet, and knees as swollen as a loaf, leaping like mad folk to the sounds of the instruments. In another corner of the room you may behold men rolling drunk, and swearing as if there was no God. In one corner are to be seen old women drinking tea with a cup-tosser, deciding on the destiny of their daughters at home. In fact, the whole seems as if planned and fostered by the father of lies himself.

“All this I have witnessed, or I certainly could not credit it.”

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. DECLAN, AT ARDMORE, COUNTY OF WATERFORD.

This annual scene of disgusting superstition is exhibited at Ardmore, in the County of Waterford, on the 24th of July, in each year. *Several thousand*

persons, of all ages and sexes, assemble upon this occasion. The greater part of the extensive strand, which forms the western part of Ardmore Bay, is literally covered by a dense mass of people. Tents and stands for the sale of whiskey are placed along the shore. Each tent has its green ensign waving on high. At an early hour in the day, says a correspondent of the Roman Catholic Expositor, those whom a religious feeling had drawn to the spot, commence their devotional exercises in a state of half nudity, by passing under the holy rock of St. Declan. Stretched at full length on the ground on the face and stomach, each devotee moved forward, as if in the act of swimming, and thus squeezed or dragged themselves through. Both sexes were obliged to submit to this humiliating mode of proceeding. *Upwards of Eleven hundred persons were observed to go through this ceremony in the course of the day.* A reverend gentleman who stood by part of the time exclaimed, "O great is their faith." This object of so great veneration, is believed to be holy, and to be endued with miraculous powers. It is said to have been wafted from Rome, upon the surface of the ocean, at the period of St. Declan's founding his Church at Ardmore, and to have borne on its top a large bell for the church tower, and also vestments for the saint himself.

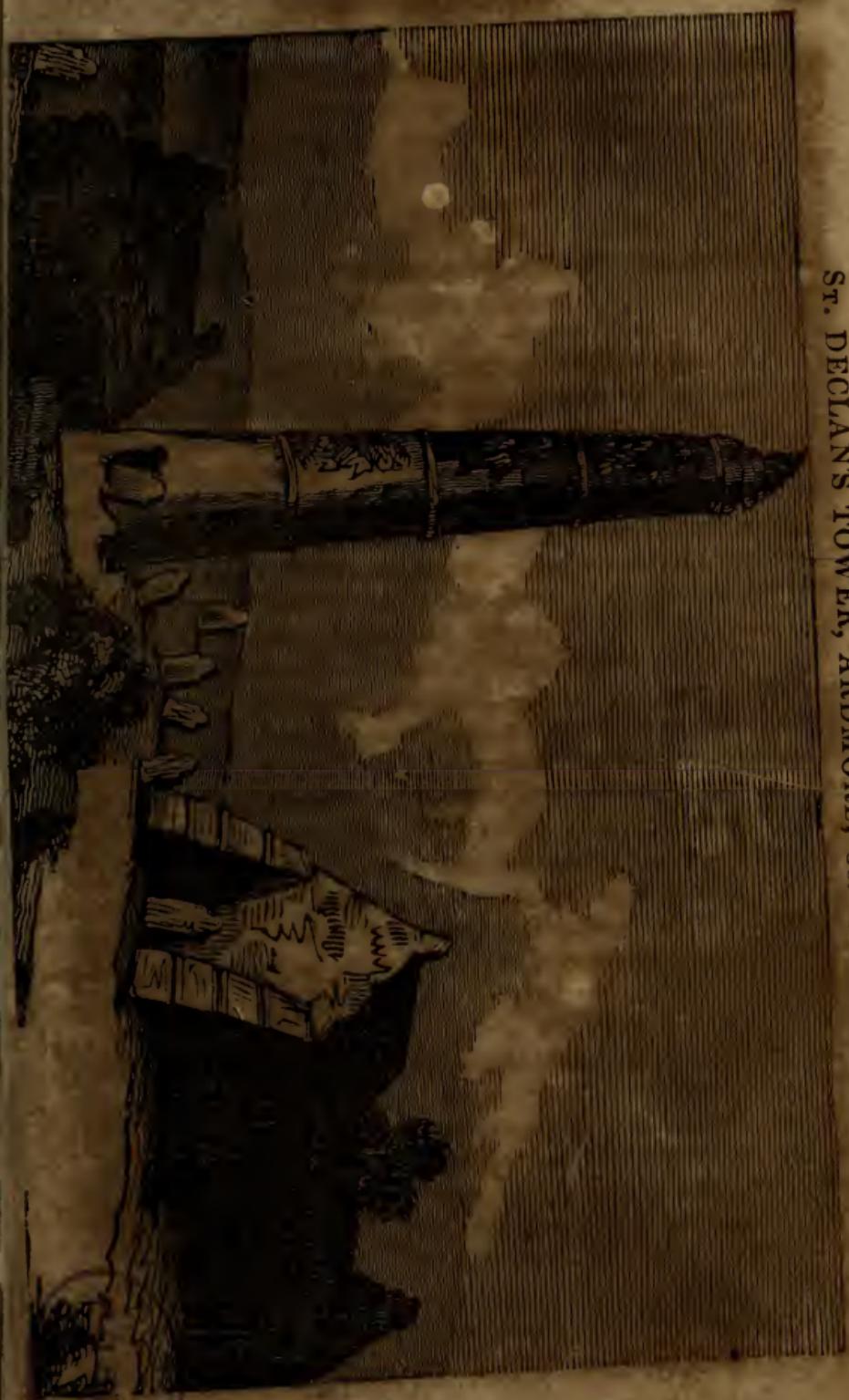
A human skull of large dimensions was placed at the head of the tomb, before which the people bowed, believing it to be the identical skull of the tutelar saint, who that day was present to look upon their devotions, and who would, on his return to the mansions of bliss, intercede at the throne of grace for all such as did him honor. This visit to St. Declan's grave completed the devotional exercise of the day, *held in greater honour than the Sabbath* by all those who venerate the saint's name, and worship at his shrine. Nevertheless, the sanctity of a day, marked even by the most humiliating exercises of devotion, did not prevent its night being passed in riot and debauchery. The tents which, throughout the day, the duties owing to the patron saint

had caused to be empty, at evening became thronged with the devotionalists of the morning, and resounded till day-break with the oaths of the blasphemer, and the shouts of the drunkard.

Relative to this Station, another correspondent observes :

“ I visited Ardmore, and am sorry to say, that the superstitious practices of the people there, exceeded any thing I had before witnessed. On arriving at Ardmore, the first thing that attracts attention is one of those round towers, so common in Ireland, and of the origin and design of which there is so little with certainty to be known. *Tradition*, with a superstitious people, can always supply the want of true records. The tower in question is said to have been built by St. Declan, in one night; that when it had arrived at its present height, a woman coming to gather herbs, looking up, asked the saint what he was doing, upon which he threw down his trowel and killed her, and coming down he threw her upon the top of the tower, where a part of her remained till a few years ago. It is certain, however, that the tower was never raised higher than it is, which it is said would have been, had not the woman interrupted the Saint in his pious work. It is in a high state of preservation, about 120 feet high, and situated in a large grave yard; here 30 or 40 persons were walking on their knees round the tower, repeating their *aves* and *Pater Nosters*, and removing their beads to keep a correct account of their work, the men all uncovered as was uniformly the case, wherever they were on their knees, and even when walking round the tower, stone, &c. &c. In the same grave yard, at the other extremity, is a stone-house, about the size of an ordinary cabin, in which the Saint is said to have been buried. In this house were a number of people on their knees adoring (I suppose) the ashes of the Saint. In a hole about the centre of the house was an old woman of whom little

St. DECLAN'S TOWER, ARDMORE, Co. WATERFORD.



more was to be seen than her head and shoulders, who retailed the Saint's clay to such persons as wished to purchase. I did not see many buy; but saw some; and in order to be fully satisfied, went close to the hole and saw a woman give money and get clay, upon giving of which the old woman whispered something in her ear in Irish. Many persons were walking round this house, who at intervals knelt down, constantly removing the beads as they went on.

“Leaving the tower, and house of clay, we proceeded through the village to the stone. I may observe, in passing, that at the extremity of the village, were numerous tents, food and liquors of all descriptions, nor were amusement wanting, such as cards, dice, the wheel of fortune, &c. &c. &c. such as are commonly to be seen at Donnybrook fair, John's-well, &c. *The Stone*, is on the sea shore, is of the same quality as the neighbouring rocks, and weighs, perhaps about two or three tons; it is said to have floated on the sea from Italy, crowned with nine bells, which came most opportunely, as at the period of its arrival the Priest, being about to celebrate Mass, was in want of a bell, upon which he sent some of the people to the spot in question, who, to their astonishment, found the stone and bells as already stated, since which time the stone has been highly venerated for the performance of miraculous cures, &c.

“Devotions had commenced at the stone previous to my arrival. But it is only at low water that people can go under the stone, and perform their devotion there; they must always take advantage of the tide. On the Saint's day, it is always necessary to remove some of the sand which accumulates under the stone to make a sufficient passage for a large man or woman—as the little rocks on which the stone rests form irregular pillars, it is necessary to have the surface under the stone lower than the front or rere. In order to begin here, *the men* take off hats, coats, shoes, and stockings, and if very large, waistcoats—they turn up their breeches, above the knee, then lying flat on the ground, put in hands,

arms, and head, one shoulder more forward than the other in order to work their way through the more easily, and coming out from under the stone at the other end, (from front to rere perhaps is four feet,) they rise on their knees and strike their backs three times against the stone, remove beads, repeat aves, &c. They then proceed on bare knees over a number of little rocks to the place where they enter again under the stone, and thus proceed three times, which done, they wash their knees, &c. &c. dress, and proceed to the well. *The women* take off bonnets, shoes, stockings, and turn their petticoats up above the knee, so that they may go on their bare knees. I saw but one woman who put her petticoats under her knees—a little boy took off his breeches; the women proceed in the same manner as the men, excepting indeed that they appeared less careful of saving their knees from being hurt by the rocks than the men. The knees of one man bled, others were bruised, and all were red. I need scarcely notice the indelicacy connected with such scenes as those described. On going to the well, which is within the precincts of an old chapel or ruin, I was obliged to turn out of the road, and go a by-way in consequence of more than a thousand people being on their knees in the vicinity of the chapel where the Priest was celebrating Mass, for on that day they have three masses. At the well, which is similarly situated with John's-Well, Kilmainham-road, two women were handing the water as fast as they could, and receiving a half-penny from each person for about half a pint. I could not help noticing a figure immediately over the well, very like the picture of *Callee*, the black goddess of Hindostan, not quite so horrific, but a great likeness between them: here were many persons on their knees before the well, and many more within the walls of the old chapel, with their faces opposite the extreme gable, on the stone of which were several crosses. Some walked on their knees up to those crosses, then rose and kissed the stone most affectionately; others knelt on one spot and rose, advanced on their feet, repeating as usual, and remov-

ing the beads, kissed the crosses, went out at another entrance; and all walked round the premises three times—at intervals bowing to the walls, continually repeating Aves, and Pater Nosters, and removing beads, and here terminated the rounds of the day. I believe some began at the tower, and went through all the various stages; but this was not the case with the majority, as it would be impossible for them to go under the stone, that work requiring so much time. I should have observed, that the number of females who went under the stone, could not have been in a greater proportion than 1 to 10 men; for the sake of decency, I am happy to state this. Also I may observe, that though some go under the stone to obtain cures for pains, &c. &c. this was not the case with many that I saw; they were generally strong healthy men and women in the prime of life—of course what they did was as penance.

“ There were present at Ardmore several thousand of as fine people as exist. I have no hesitation in saying that the peasantry of the Counties of Cork and Waterford, surpass any people I have seen in Ireland, Scotland, or England. Is it not awful then to see them almost wholly given to idolatry: I can truly say, that could I have spoken in the Irish language, if my life had been the forfeit, I should have preached unto them Jesus; but as I could not, I could only grieve at what I saw, and pray to God to bless all means to enlighten my poor countrymen—it is said that on some occasions the priests have horse-whipped the people from the stone, but they returned to their superstitions, as soon as they went away; but this was not the case on this occasion. I saw two of the priests pass very near and take no notice; I was in the chapel and saw one of them giving the Host to some old woman. I left Ardmore, after spending three hours there; all continued as when I entered, except that the number of devotees seemed smaller at different places, the stone excepted, eating, drinking, and gambling.”

MODERN CONSECRATION OF A WELL, COUNTY CORK.

(From a Correspondent of the Roman Catholic Expositor.)

"In the parish of Marmalane, near Monkstown, County Cork, and situated in the lands of Lackane, there is a spring, the waters of which were consecrated about the year 1795, under the following circumstances, according to the general testimony of the inhabitants now residing in that neighbourhood :

"The parish priest having one morning at a very early hour, dreamed that the well would prove of miraculous efficacy in certain cases: and being strongly impressed with the dream, arose from his bed, and awoke his servant, then living with him in a house near the well, to whom he disclosed his intentions in part, and required his attendance with him on the spot. The man whose name was Daniel Kirke, instantly obeyed, and witnessed the solemn benediction of the fountain. It having so fallen out that the morning was that of the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, to the tutelage of those saints the place was committed, and it still bears their names. The usual observances followed on the part of the surrounding peasantry, by whom the well is now resorted to, and by whom it has been furnished with memorials of the benefits pretended to have been derived, similar to those which have heretofore been described in like places of ancient superstitious fame.

"The above act of gross superstition was performed by a gentleman, who was for many years a bishop amongst the Roman Catholics; a man not wanting in abilities and literary attainments. The merely moral and intelligent portion of the community will not hope to find the people of this country improved under a system, one of the principal conductors of which could be the chief actor in the above scene. And such of our community as have been blessed, through the mercy

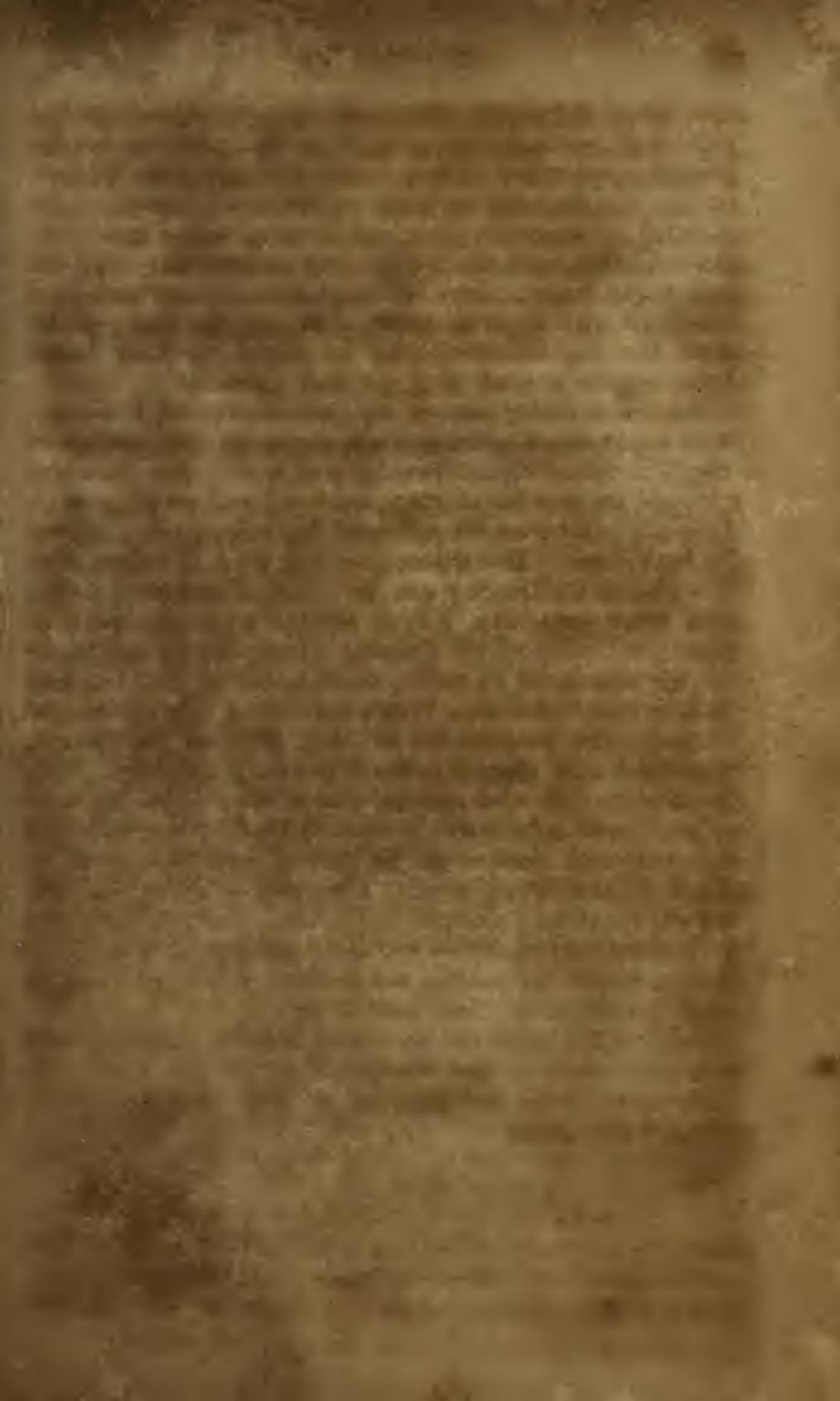
of God, with a knowledge of the all sufficiency and the alone sufficiency of the ONE ATONEMENT made for sin, by the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, will be grieved to their hearts, for the souls of their countrymen, whom they find thus, as it were, abandoned to the misdirection of men, who could as above transfer the power and glory of God, not indeed to ‘birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,’ but to inanimate water.”

PATTERN OF PORT ST. COLLEN, &c.

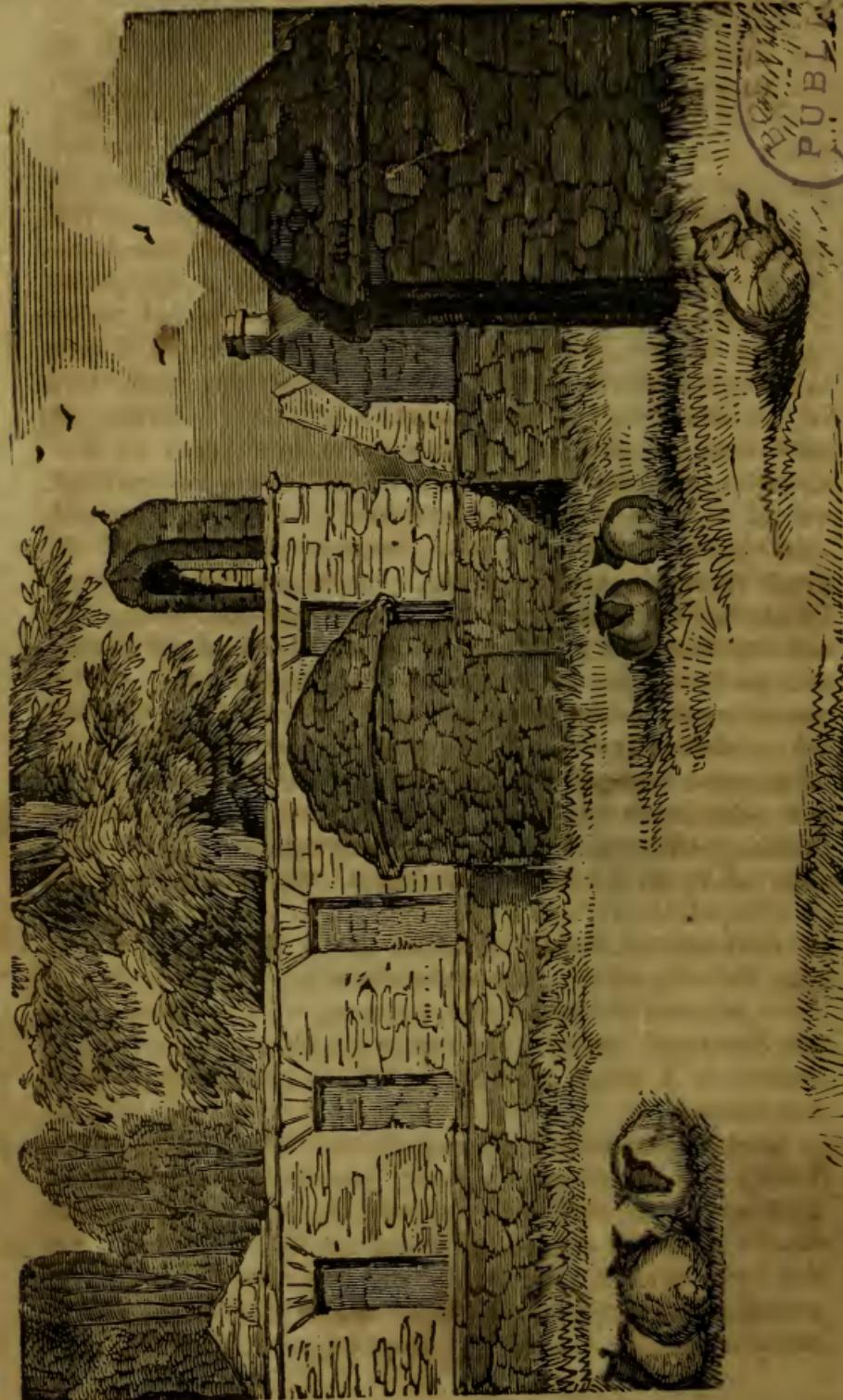
There is in the town of Ballymote, in the barony of Corrin and County Sligo, an old monastery called Port St. Collen, which is deemed to have been built by the Francisan Friars formerly in this kingdom. A PATRON is held here once every year, on St. Francis's day in harvest, where every person who professes to be of that order, and most of the religiously inclined Roman Catholics of the whole country assemble, to confess their sins, and perform a station, in order to entitle them to the *plenary indulgence* promised by that saint to all his votaries, but in particular to all who wear his cord about them, and say the prayers, and perform the other duties enjoined them. All the Priests and Friars in the neighbouring parishes assembled here on the above day, being sure of getting a shilling from every person who confessed. Some short time since, it appears that a Priest in the town considered the whole profits should be his own, being in his own parish, and the contention was so hot between him and the rest of the Priests, that they altered the station to Ballaghaderren, a town about ten miles off; and they all cried out against the ancient place of worship. Another Priest established a new Port Saint Collen in his own parish, contiguous to where he was making a new road through a bog; so he gave out from the altar, for every man in the parish to come to where he was to institute the new Port Saint Collen, and that after doing their duty there, they were to spend

the rest of the day on the road. He purchased twelve gallons of whiskey, and gave it to the men, which so preyed upon their empty stomachs that they all got drunk. In the evening they sent for more whiskey, and stopped all night drinking and fighting at the new Port Saint Collen, and when their women saw that they did not come home, they followed them to the spot, and sat down with them all night. I myself saw some of the men the day following with bandages on their heads tying up the wounds they got that night.

I know a young man in my neighbourhood, C——, who about seven years ago was going to the assizes of Sligo, to make his defence against a still fine that was charged on him for making whiskey; and on his way (it happened to be on the sabbath) he stopped at a chapel to hear mass. The Priest gave out from the altar, that Port Saint Collen day was on such a day next week; and after preaching a long sermon on the necessity of the intercession of St. Francis, concluded by calling on all his hearers to go there, assuring them, that let their sins be ever so heinous, they were sure of being pardoned through the intercession of that glorious St. Francis, provided they should perform the duty required. This is exactly what answers me, said C—— in his own mind, (as he afterwards acknowledged,) I can blindfold the guager to-morrow at the assizes, and then go off to Port Saint Collen, where *I am sure of being absolved*. So the poor man went to Sligo, took his false oath, and to get absolution did all the duty required at Port Saint Collen; but he soon after became deranged, and so outrageously mad, that before he was tied, he struck a neighbouring man on the head with a hatchet, and cleft it in two, so that the man died on the spot. He was then taken and sent off to Sligo gaol, where he shortly after died.



THE OLD CHAPEL, AND TWO WELLS.



Sketched for the "Holy Wells of Ireland."

PRINTED
FOR THE
HOLY WELLS
OF IRELAND
BY
J. C. DODD,
1850.

HOLY WELLS OF STRUEL, NEAR DOWN-PATRICK.

About one mile and a half to the east of Downpatrick, and within about half a mile of Slieve-na-Grideal, one of the most celebrated of the ancient Pagan high places, is a hill of about 150 feet of perpendicular elevation, called *Struel Mountain*, which remains uncultivated, producing a little mixture of grass and shamrock, with a few hawthorns, and an abundant crop of furze. At the foot of this hill, which is looked upon as holy ground, at about two miles distance, a monastery, built, as it is said, by St. Patrick and St. Bridget, formerly stood; near which is a well, bearing the name of the former saint, and supposed to possess extraordinary virtues, both in healing the diseases of the body, and in cleansing the pollutions of the soul; a *sacred* stream, supplied by this spring, runs unpolluted by any other stream until it arrives at Struel. It then flows through the consecrated plain, by a channel covered over with flags and large stones, and supplies in its course two of the four wells which it originally fed. Two of these wells, which are in a higher situation, appear to have been formed by hollowing out a little ground near the course of the rivulet; while the water enters the other two by spouts, having a fall of three feet into one, and six into the other. To these there are coverings in the form of centry-boxes; the covering of the third is of the form and size of a moderate pig-sty; and that of the fourth is a kind of little cottage, consisting of two apartments.

One of the wells is appropriated to the curing of the blind, one to select company, one to general and promiscuous use, and one, we believe, reserved for drinking.—Near the top of the gable of the building which encloses the principal well, was a carved figure of the saint's face, now nearly worn away; but the patients seem to think it necessary to put their fingers in a hole

in the wall connected with it. They then touch the remnant of the figure with their hands, which they devoutly kiss. Wonderful are the cures which are performed, it is said, at these wells—the blind are enabled to see, and the lame to dance. Those who are not cured, eagerly inquire “ who has got the blessing ? ”

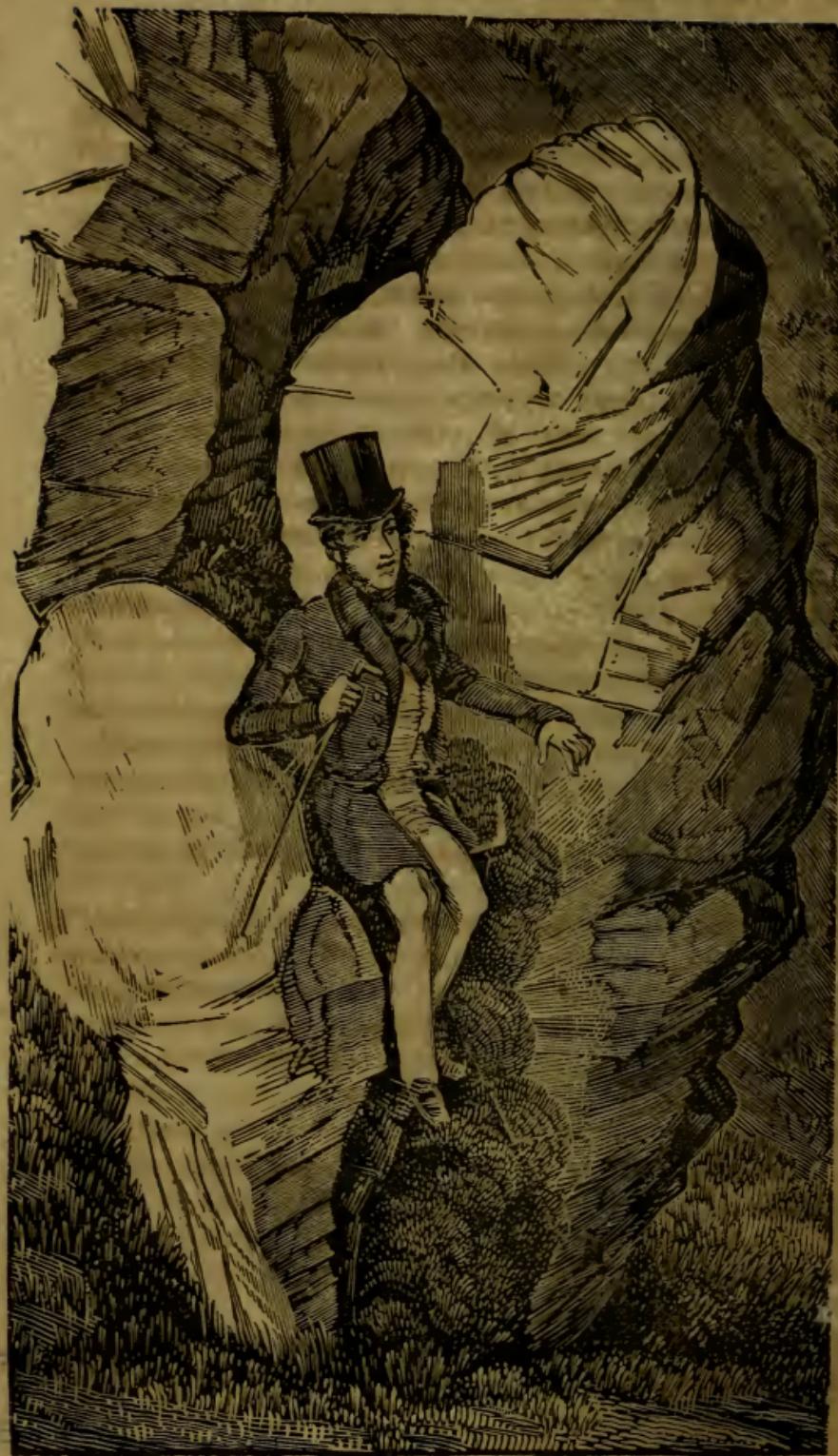
To this place about one thousand people resort every midsummer, for the purpose of doing penance. They come from all parts of Ireland, and even from England and Scotland. Besides these, there is always a large crowd of spectators, amounting probably to another thousand. For the comfort and accommodation of both, a number of tents are erected in the plain, where whiskey is sold, and entertainment of every kind is afforded. The ceremonies commence upon the Sunday preceding, and commonly end upon the Sunday succeeding midsummer-day. As it is not necessary, however, that each penitent should continue here during all this period, few remain longer than one half of the week. The latter half seems to be regarded as the more holy ; for the place is, during that time, more frequented, particularly on the last day, which is for that reason called “ big Sunday.” No one appears to act as a general superintendent, but the multitudes appear to be left to themselves in submitting to the penance, and performing the ceremonies with which it is connected.

The penitents all proceed in the first instance to Downpatrick, where each procures a portion of holy soil from the grave of the patron saint of Ireland.

This grave is said to be distinguished from all the surrounding burying ground, by its never giving birth to a single weed, nor to any other herbs than grass and shamrock. From this place, having procured a handful of sacred earth, they proceed to some house in town where masses are said every day during the week, from morning till night ; and after a short delay set off for Struel. The penance begins at the foot of the hill, which they climb upon their bare and bleeding knees,



ST. PATRICK'S CHAIR.



Sketched for the "Holy Wells of Ireland."

BRA

by a steep and stony narrow path, originally intended as an emblem of the way that leadeth to eternal life.

A few, whose sins are of a milder cast may run up this path barefoot; but those who have been guilty of black and grievous offences, besides crawling upon their knees, must carry a large rough stone, with their hands placed upon the back of their necks. When they reach the top of the hill, they run down at a quick trot by the other side, and, returning to the narrow path, ascend as before. This they repeat three, seven, nine, or twelve times, or even a much greater number, according to the nature of their transgressions. The more respectable among them keep their reckoning by beads; while the poorer sort lift a pebble to mark each ascent. After having thus completed their rounds, they are next turned in what is called St. Patrick's chair. This is a kind of chair formed of four rocks, so placed, apparently by nature, that three of them serve as a back and sides, and the remaining one as a bottom to the seat. It stands about the middle of the mountain, at a short distance from the narrow path. Each penitent takes a seat in this chair, and is turned in it thrice, by a person who acts as superintendant of this part of the ceremony, and who receives a penny from each for his trouble.

This portion of the penance being over, the penitents descend into the plain, where they move round certain cairns of stones, some crawling, and others running, as before. Each individual, however, must here carry a stone, which he adds to the heap. These cairns are in groups of seven and twelve, which respectively denote the days of the week, and the months of the year; or, as some will have it the seven churches and the twelve apostles. Around these they go seven times, or seven times seven, and twelve times, or twelve times twelve—measured as before by their various degrees of criminality. The next part of the ceremony is to proceed to the large well, termed the body-well, or, by some, the well of sins.

Before entering it, however, they approach with profound reverence a flag of freestone, which is placed in the wall, and is possessed of some peculiarly sanctifying powers. This they touch with their fingers, and then cross themselves repeatedly, and thus become prepared for the purifications of the holy wells. If they can afford a few pence of admission money, they may enter the larger well, where they have room to undress; if not, they must content themselves with the second or limb-well, into which they are admitted free of expense, being obliged, however, to strip themselves in the adjoining fields. All modesty is here thrown aside. As they approach the well, they throw off even their undergarments, and with more than Lacedemonian indifference, before the assembled multitudes, they go forward in a state of absolute nudity, plunge in, and bathe promiscuously. After such immersion, they go through the ceremony of washing their eyes, and conclude the whole by drinking from the fourth well, called by some the well of forgetfulness, and by others the water of life.

Thus end the ceremonies of the day. Those of the evening follow, and form a remarkable contrast. The employments of the day seem to be considered as the labours of virtue, those of the evening are her rewards, by which they are amply compensated. Their eyes, after having been bathed in the sacred stream, instantly discover the flowery path of pleasure, which conducts them to the tents prepared for their reception, where they are supplied with copious draughts, of which the water of life was but a faint emblem. In these tents, and in the adjoining fields, under the canopy of a pure sky, they spend the whole night, quaffing the soul-inspiring beverage, and indulging in various gratifications to which the time and place are favourable; for it is understood, that while the jubilee continues, and as long as the happy multitudes remain on the sacred ground, they cannot contract new guilt!

Precisely at twelve o'clock on each midsummer-eve the water was accustomed to rise and overflow the large well, and all its miraculous powers had then attained

THE GREAT WELL.



Sketched for the 'Holy Wells of Ireland.'

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their maximum. In the days of Harris, the author of the History of the county of Down (A. D. 1744,) this object was effected by means of a sluice, which retained or transmitted the water at pleasure. Since the publication of his work, the sluice was withdrawn, and in its place sods substituted, which interested persons removed with their feet at the usual time; and when the expecting devotees saw the water rising in the wells, they attributed the phenomenon to Saint Patrick. A few years ago, however, a respectable inhabitant of Belfast perforated a part of the embankment, and let the water escape in another direction, and thus disappointed the expectants of the miracle. The wells, of course, remained dry; and in the succeeding year there were but few visitants, comparatively speaking, to this scene of mingled penitence and sensual enjoyment. The following year, however, the pilgrims to Struel were again numerous; and they have since been carried on with all their former vigour.

To this pool many diseased persons also resort from the remotest corners of Ireland, in the fullest hopes of having their bodily infirmities removed. The blind, the lame, and the maimed, and those afflicted with various other diseases, spend many a weary day in travelling to this wonder-working fountain.

The following curious narrative, relative to a *station* performed at this place, may be fully relied on: it was communicated by a gentleman residing in Downpatrick:

“ On Monday, 15th May inst. early in the morning I visited Struel, with the intention of seeing a young man, who had travelled barefoot from the County of Galway to perform what he terms *stations*. The following is the substance of a conversation that took place between us at the foot of the mount called Struel, in a little cabin, after he had done his first station for the day: .

What is your name? John Lalley.

Where are you from? The County of Galway.

What induced you to come so far to do stations at this place?

Last November, a spirit in the shape of a man, appeared to me every night for three weeks, near the house in which I lived in the County of Galway, and one night I took courage and spoke to it, saying, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, do me no harm nor any one belonging to me, and tell me what is it that troubles you?" The spirit then replied, "I am glad you spoke, for this is the last night I would have appeared to you. I have been dead these nineteen years, and you were but three and a-half old when I departed. Before my death, I promised to do stations at Struel, but never performed my vow, and because I did not do them I cannot rest."

Did you enquire what was his name?

Yes; his name was Paddy Brady.

Where did he say he lived when he promised to do the stations?

In the neighbourhood of Downpatrick, near Struel.

What was his calling when living? A carpenter.

Have you made inquiry since you came to this county, if ever such a person lived about Struel?

Yes, but no one recollects him; some labourers indeed, who are working at Down gaol, to whom I was speaking last Friday, thought they had some recollection of him.

Is it not strange that no people about this neighbourhood remember him, when he is only nineteen years dead?

No, he was a harmless boy, but neglected to do his stations, and therefore could not be at rest.

Where did he say his spirit had been for the last nineteen years?

For the first five years he was up to his neck in water, under a bridge in this county: and for the last fourteen he has been in a sand-pit in the County Galway.

Are you certain that no person ever attempted to impose upon you in this affair; were you ever inclined to doubt

about it ? No, never ; for the night he was going away he took hold of my hand, and left a black mark on it, and went off in a flash of light.

Have you been in a bad state of health lately ? No.

Have you felt your head very uneasy or in pain ?

Never in my life.

Where do you believe that the spirit is now ? In Purgatory.

And was he in Purgatory all the time he was under the bridge and in the sand-pit ? Yes.

Why did you not come sooner to do the stations ?

Because he told me that the proper time to do them would be from May to Mid-summer.

Have you ever spoke to your parish Priest respecting this strange affair ? Yes, I have.

What did he advise you to do ?

He advised me to do the stations.

What is your parish Priest's name ? Coyne.

Has the Bishop of Galway ever heard of the matter ?

Mr. Coyne is the under Bishop of the diocese.

Were there any masses said for the soul of this man after he died ?

Yes, his mother got two masses celebrated, for which she paid ?

And could not the masses get him out of Purgatory ?

The masses will hold good, and if he had not promised to do the stations, they would have fully answered.

Have you seen the Priest of this parish since you came ? I have.

Have you told him all about the matter ? Yes.

Did he say any thing against your doing these stations ? Oh, no !

Did he say he would write to your Priest about you ? Yes.

Has he done so ? Not yet.

Have you brought any letter from your parish Priest, to the Priest of this parish ? No.

How long have you been here ? To-morrow will be the tenth day.

What time do you begin to your stations ?

About six o'clock in the morning, and I do six stations before I break my fast. I have not done until seven o'clock in the evening.

I see you are taking a smoke; do you never take a drink of water through the day?

No, neither bite or sup till the six stations are finished.

Do you believe that you will get any benefit of your own soul in consequence of your doing these stations for the spirit you supposed you have seen?

Yes, I do, for the spirit told me if I would do this for him, that he would do 500 times as much for me when he would be happy.

If you had not engaged to do these stations, what do you think would have been the consequence?

The spirit said that if I would not consent to do this for him now, he would have to remain in the *sand pit* *fifty five years longer*.

Could he get no one but you to do the stations for him?

I was the person fixed on since I was three years and a half old.

Have you made any agreement to see the spirit when you go back?

No, for as soon as I am done he will be happy.

Do you believe that he is now in pain?

I bless my Lord that he is not now in pain, but he is in total darkness.

Do you think that the Lord Jesus Christ, could have saved him without either the masses or the station?

To this he made no reply, but in a hesitating manner, expressed a persuasion that the masses and stations were really necessary.

Can you read? No.

How do you earn your bread? I am a brogue-maker.

Is your father or mother alive? My mother is alive.

Have you walked from the county of Galway here? I have, barefoot.

How do you support yourself while here?

I have no means of support but what I get from the poor family of this house, they are very good to me.

Will you go home as soon as you have done all the stations?

I will not be able, my feet are so sore.

He then showed his feet; they were much bruised, and when he pulled up his drawers, his knees were nearly in a state of complete ulceration.

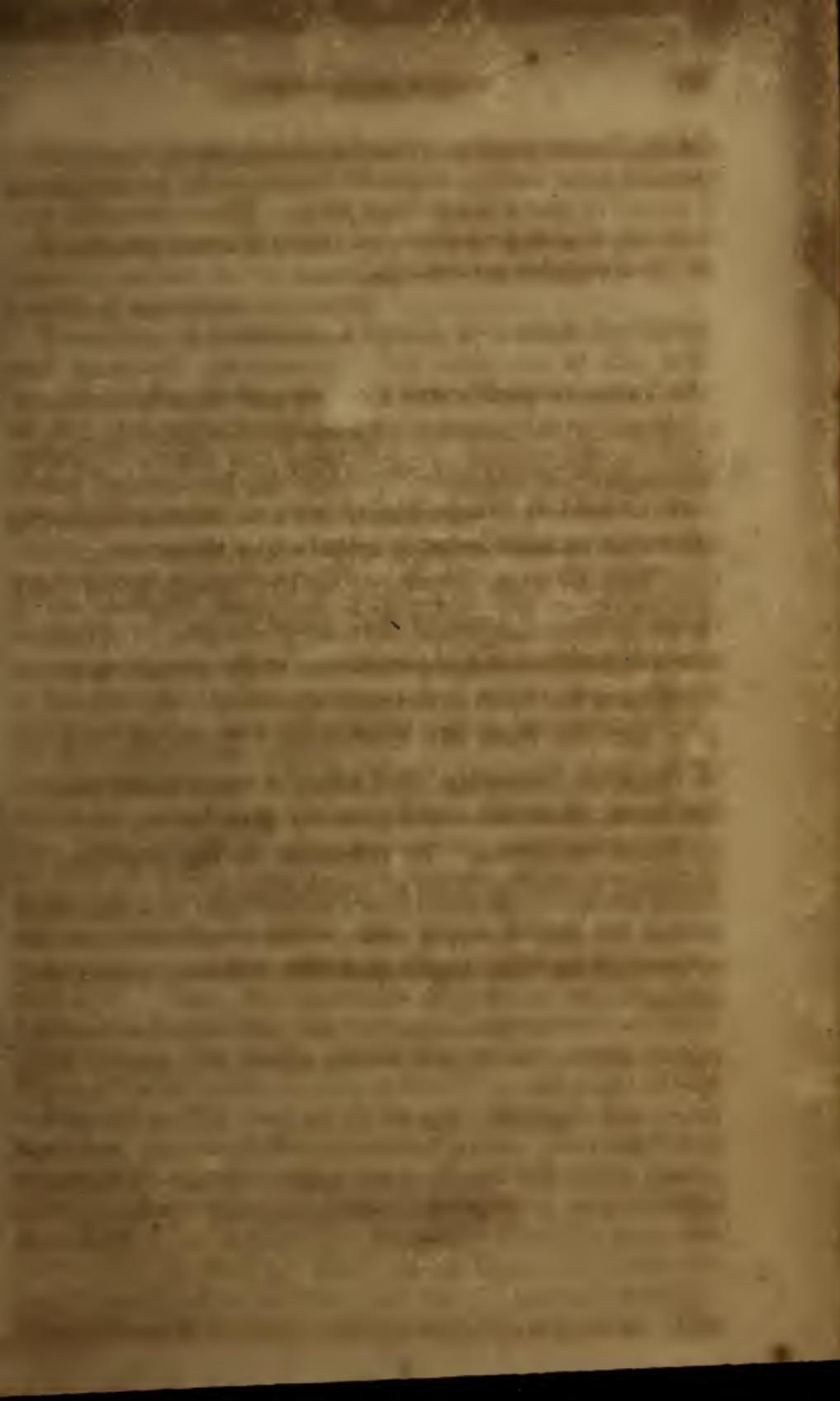
The doing of a station at Struel, is a most degrading and laborious ceremony. The devotee, in the first instance, falls down upon his knees before a small gathering of stones placed against the ruins of an old chapel, where he repeats one Pater Noster, and ten Ave Marias. In this posture of profound humiliation, he frequently kisses the ground and passionately beats his breast; then rising, he proceeds to another heap of stones, where he repeats acts of humiliation. When he rises from his knees he walks round the heap seven times, reckoning his beads as he goes, and apparently absorbed in deep devotion. There are, near the ruins, three of these heaps, which are called cairns, round each of which the penitent, when he prays, goes seven times; then he perambulates all the cairns seven times.

Near these heaps are two wells walled in, at each of which he performs as at the cairns. Then he proceeds to a little hillock of grass and stones, near a large well, or kind of a house walled and roofed, which contains a stone spout or shoe within about three feet from the floor, whence the renowned streams proceed that are reputed to possess extraordinary healing virtues on Mid-summer eve. Here he repeats his prayers as before; then taking the large well, the two small, the cairns, with the little hillock, he walks round the whole seven times. From these he proceeds to a mountain on the right of the wells, and at the foot of it he goes through the same round of duty as at the cairns and wells. He then takes a circuit of a most rugged part of the hill seven times, after which he enters between two or three large stones, that form what is called St. Patrick's Chair. Here he prays most fervently. Then rising from his knees he turns round several times, after which he climbs over the chair, descends the hill, and so completes a station. The

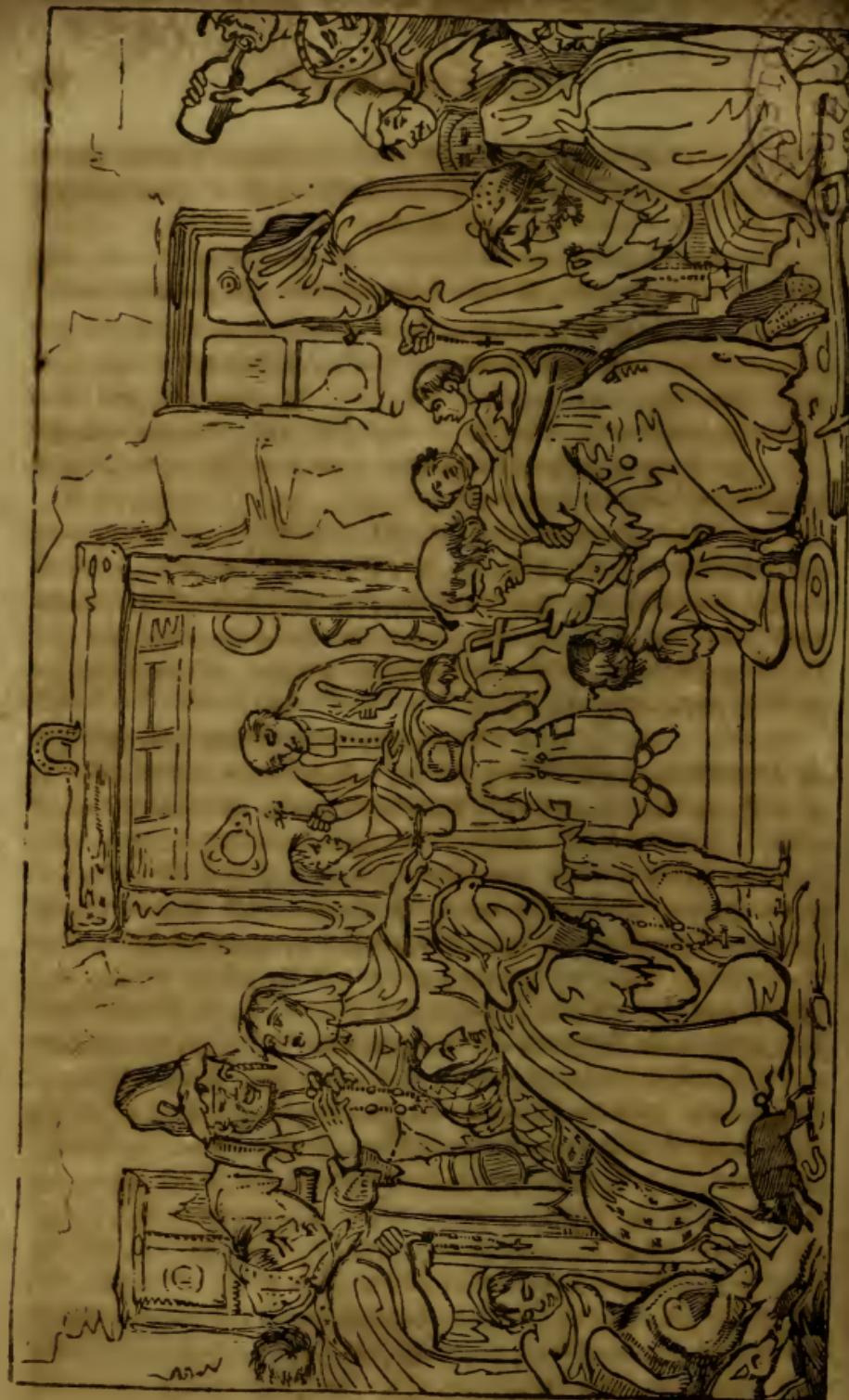
doing of one station occupies nearly two hours; frequently poor Lalley, while his knees would bear it, took a round of the hill on them bare. There are different methods of doing stations, but this is the manner that the above character proceeded."

In order to enable our English and Scotch friends to comprehend the meaning attached to the term "stations" it may be necessary to mention that they are of two kinds — those held at "Holy Wells," and other sacred places, dedicated to some saint or angel—and those which are, from time to time, appointed by the priests to be held in the houses of some of their parishioners, for the purposes of confession and penance. In the preceding pages the former has been sufficiently described : the following brief extract, from Mr. Carleton's " Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry," will afford a much better idea of the latter, than we could possibly give by any short or curtailed definition. In reference to the *Patrons*, or *Patterns*, (meetings held in celebration of some favourite saint,) we would apply the same observation to the extracts from Mr. Inglis and Mr. Croker, which also follow.

→ your English + Scotch
friends (of your type)
know too little about
stations to comprehend
or criticize them.



THE STATION.



DESCRIPTION OF A STATION AT A PRIVATE HOUSE.

FROM "TRAITS AND STORIES OF THE IRISH PEASANTRY."

The reader is to understand, that a station in this sense differs from a station made to any peculiar spot, remarkable for local sanctity. There, a station means the performance of a pilgrimage to a certain place, under peculiar circumstances, and the going through a stated number of prayers and other penitential ceremonies, for the purpose of wiping out sin in this life, or of relieving the soul of some relation from the pains of purgatory in the other ; here, it simply means the coming of the parish Priest and his Curate to some house in the townland, on a day publicly announced from the Altar for that purpose, on the preceding Sabbath.

This is done to give those who live within the district in which the station is held an opportunity of *coming to their duty*, as frequenting the ordinance of confession is emphatically called. Those who attend confession in this manner once a year, are considered *merely* to have done their duty ; it is expected, however, that they should *approach the tribunal*, as it is termed, at least twice during that period, that is, at the two great feasts of Christmas and Easter. The observance or omission of this rite among Roman Catholics, establishes, in a great degree, the nature of individual character. The man who frequents his duty will seldom be pronounced a bad man, let his conduct and principles be what they may in other respects ; and he who neglects it, is looked upon, by those who attend it, as in a state little short of reprobation, no matter how correct or religious he may be, either in public or private life. * * *

There can scarcely be a greater contrast in any thing than that presented by the beginning of a station-day and its close. In the morning, the faces of those who are about to confess, present an expression, in which terror, awe, guilt, and veneration, may be easily traced ; but in the evening all is mirth and jollity. Before confession

every man's memory is employed in running over the catalogue of crimes, as they are to be found in the prayer-books, under the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the *Commandments* of the Church ! the four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance, and the seven sins against the Holy Ghost. How is it possible, therefore, that a man who is thus engaged in endeavouring to recollect and classify his individual offences, can possibly feel sincere sorrow, or the fear of God ? According to the constitution of the human mind, it cannot be done.

It is wrong to say, that the Roman Catholic peasantry go *spontaneously* to comply with this unnatural rite : in many instances, it is true, they do ; but they generally approach it with terror, and the most unequivocal reluctance ; and nothing but the strange and superstitious belief, that the priests can absolve them from the guilt of their individual sins, how black and enormous soever they may be, induces them to go at all. * * *

Whenever a station occurs in Ireland, a crowd of mendicants and other strolling impostors seldom fail to attend it ; on this occasion, at least, they did not. The day, though frosty, was fine ; and the door was surrounded by a train of this description, including both sexes, some sitting on stones, some on stools, with their blankets rolled up under them ; and others, more ostensibly devout, on their knees, hard at prayer ; which, lest their piety might escape notice, our readers may be assured, that they did not offer up in silence. On one side you might observe a sturdy fellow, with a pair of tattered urchins secured to his back by a sheet or blanket pinned across his breast with a long iron skewer, their heads just visible at his shoulders munching a thick piece of wheaten bread, and the father on his knees, with a huge wooden cross in his hand, repeating his *padereens*, and occasionally throwing a jolly eye towards the door, or, through the window, opposite which he knelt, into the kitchen, as often as any peculiar stir or commotion led him to suppose that breakfast, the loadstar of his devotion, was about to be produced.

Scattered about the door, were knots of these men and women, occasionally chatting together ; and when the

subject of their conversation happened to be exhausted, resuming their beads until some new topic would occur, and so on alternately.

The interior of the kitchen where the neighbours were assembled, presented an appearance somewhat more decorous. Andy Lawlor, the mass-server, in whom the priest had the greatest confidence, stood in a corner examining, in their catechism, those who intended to confess; and, if they were able to stand the test, he gave them a bit of twisted brown paper as a ticket, and they were received at the tribunal.

The first question the priest uniformly puts to the penitent is, "Can you repeat the *Confiteor*?" If the latter answers in the affirmative, he goes on until he comes to the words, *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, when he stops, it being improper to repeat the remainder until after he has confessed; but, if he is ignorant of the *Confiteor* the priest repeats it for him! and he commences the rehearsal of his offences, specifically as they occurred; and not only does he reveal his individual crimes, but his very thoughts and intentions. By this wily regulation our readers may easily perceive, that the penitent is completely at the mercy of the priest—that all family feuds, quarrels, and secrets, are laid open to his eye—that the ruling passions of men's lives are held up before him, and all the weaknesses and propensities of a corrupt nature—all the unguarded avenues of the human heart and character, are brought within his positive knowledge, and that too, as they exist in the young and the old, the married and the single, the male and the female. It has been often wondered at, why there is, and has been, such a deplorable prostration of reason and moral independence before the priesthood of the Church of Rome, in the persons of their followers; but, let me ask, would it not be a greater anomaly were it otherwise? How is it possible for any individual who throws open the secret corruptions and failings of his heart before the eye of a priest—who puts him in possession of all the crimes and delinquencies of his life, to stand in the confidence of a manly and erect indepen-

dence before him ? Is it possible that he should be able to look him in the face, or bear the force of his glance ? Under these circumstances, without at all considering the influence produced by the spiritual power with which Roman Catholics believe the priests to be invested, let us not think it strange that such a melancholy debasement characterizes the laity of the Romish Church.

It was curious to remark the ludicrous expression of temporary sanctity which was apparent on the countenances of many young men and maidens who were remarkable in the neighbourhood for attending dances and wakes, but who, on the present occasion, were sobered down to gravity which sat very awkwardly upon them ; particularly in the eyes of those who knew the lightness and drollery of their characters. This, however, was observable only *before* confession ; for, as soon as "the priest's blessed hand had been over them," their gloom and anxiety passed away, and the thoughtless buoyancy of their natural disposition resumed its influence over their minds. A good-humoured nod, or a sly wink, from a young man to his female acquaintance, would now be indulged in ; or, perhaps, a small joke would escape, which seldom failed to produce a subdued laugh from such as *had* confessed, or an impatient rebuke from those who *had not*.

"Tim !" one would exclaim, "arn't ye ashamed or afeard to get on that-a-way, and his Reverence undher the wan roof wid ye ?"

"Tim, you had betther ddrop your joking," a second would observe, "and not be putting us through other, wherein we have our offences to remember ; you have got your *job* over, and now you have nothing to trouble you."

"Indeed, it's fine behaviour," a third would say, "and you afther coming from the priest's knee, and what is more, didn't *resave* yet ; but, wait till Father Con appears, and I'll warrant, you'll be as grave as another, for all you're so stout now."

The conversation would then pass to the merits of Father Philemy and Father Con, as confessors.

"Well," one would observe—"for my part, I'd rather go to Father Philemy, fifty times over, than wanst to Father Con, bekase he never axes questions; but whatever you like to tell him, he hears it, and for-gives you at wanst."

"And so sign's an it," observed another; "he could confess more in a day, than Father Con could do in a week."

"But for all that," observed Andy Lawlor, "it's still best to go to the man that puts the questions, you persave, and that won't let the turning of a straw escape him. Whin myself goes to Father Philemy, somehow or other, I totally disremember more nor wan half of what I intinded to tell him, but Father Con misses nothing, for he axes it."

When the last observation was finished, Father Con, finding that the usual hour for breakfast had arrived, came into the kitchen, to prepare for the celebration of mass. For this purpose a table was cleared, and just in the nick of time arrived old Moll Brian, the vestment woman, or itinerant sacristan, whose usual occupation was to carry the priest's *robes* and other apparatus, from station to station. In a short time Father Con was surpliced and robed; Andy Lawlor, whose face was charged with commensurate importance during the ceremony, *served* Mass, and answered the priest stoutly in Latin, although he had not the advantage of understanding that sacerdotal language. Those who had *confessed*, now *communicated*; after which, each of them took a draught of water out of a small jug, which was handed round from one to another. The ceremony then closed, and those who had partaken of the sacrament, with the exception of such as were detained for breakfast, after filling their bottles with holy water, went home with a light heart.

In the immediate vicinity of the scene of our present sketch, lived a man named Jack Shields, who was considered by his neighbours to be a person of an amiable and benevolent disposition; moral and inoffensive in his conduct, as well as upright and honest in his prin-

ciples and dealings—but looked upon to be somewhat eccentric in his general manners. Shields was a man very much addicted to reading, and had entertained, for years before the period in question, rather singular opinions upon several tenets of his own church. He read both the Douay and the Protestant Bibles, in defiance of the priest; gave mass up altogether, except when he understood that the priest was to preach, and then he was punctual in his attendance. He had also abandoned confession—having often been heard to say, that he did not think his brother sinner had any power to absolve his soul from the guilt which he incurred in relation to God. “I know,” he would say, “*I am sure, that God can forgive me; but I have not the same certainty as to the priest.* God has commanded me to come to *Himself*, repenting, and has promised to pardon me: now this is enough for me, so I’ll take the sure side” * * *

Shields literally kept his word; for, true to his views, he neither went to mass nor confession afterwards. In such tenets of his own church as he believed were true and scriptural, he educated and instructed his son and daughter, the only children he had. He also permitted both to attend mass, and the former to go to confession; but the daughter he would by no means allow to frequent that distressing rite.

His wife, however, who was as weak and as bigotted as the husband was firm and liberal, perpetually harassed the daughter about the sin of neglecting confession; but the latter was intimately acquainted with the Bible, and without at all being aware of it, was considerably more attached to the Protestant, than to her own Church. For two or three years, that is, during the period in which the mere girl approximates to the full grown woman the mother’s arguments to induce her to go to her duty were fruitless—for the father had, drawn by no means a favourable character of confession and the daughter possessing a pure and modest mind, entertained a rooted aversion against it. But a little before the time of Phaddhy’s Station, the mother began

to exhibit symptoms of a decline, and as she never ceased pressing the former on this point, the affection excited in the daughter's breast by the apprehension of loosing her, induced a compliance on her part, which no other circumstances could have effected—for Mary (so she was called) possessed much of her father's good sense, firmness and independence.

The mother having at length prevailed, she and Mary attended at Phaddhy's early on the morning of the station in question; as soon as they entered the house, there was an especial welcome for both, particularly for the daughter, because the peculiar circumstances in which Shields had educated her, and her own firm adherence to them, were well known.

" Well, Katty, avourneen," said her mother—" blessed be the holy mother of God for it, she has come at long last; and it's well for her abagur, that she took my advice, I hope; for, indeed, Phaddhy," turning the discourse to him, " I wont be long with her—see how that bit of a walk up here has left me without a blast of breath in my body!"

The mother was certainly very much exhausted, and had every appearance of being in a deep and rapid decline. As she uttered these words, the daughter, who sat removed from the crowd that occupied the lower end of the house, fixed her eyes upon her, and, in an instant, her long, dark lashes were filled with tears. Mary, indeed, was a girl of uncommon personal beauty and fine figure, and as she sat with her pocket handkerchief between her hands, and her dark eyes shining through her tears, she was certainly calculated to excite a strong interest in her favour. She wore no cap, but had a dark ribbon tied simply round her head, from which her brown clustering locks fell in thick luxuriant curls over her fair neck and shoulders. Her hair was divided before and showed a white polished forehead, that would have graced a higher station in life. It might have been easily remarked, that her attendance here was involuntary, for there was a feverish anxiety about her amounting to a visible tremor. She was wrapped in

thought, and sometimes appeared so pale, that one might almost feel apprehensive of her swooning away—at other times so flushed, that her face and neck were suffused with one glow of crimson. In this state of agitation she remained until the person who had been in with Father Con came out: her mother then said—"Mary, come now, acushla, there's nobody with Father Con: come and pluck up courage, alannah—you won't be long." Mary, however, got as pale as death, and her lips became white. She rose up, but was obliged to sit down again, until she regained more strength. In the mean time, her mother and Katty, and several other of the women then present, afforded her every assistance; as her lips were parched, she asked for a drink of water, but this she could not get.

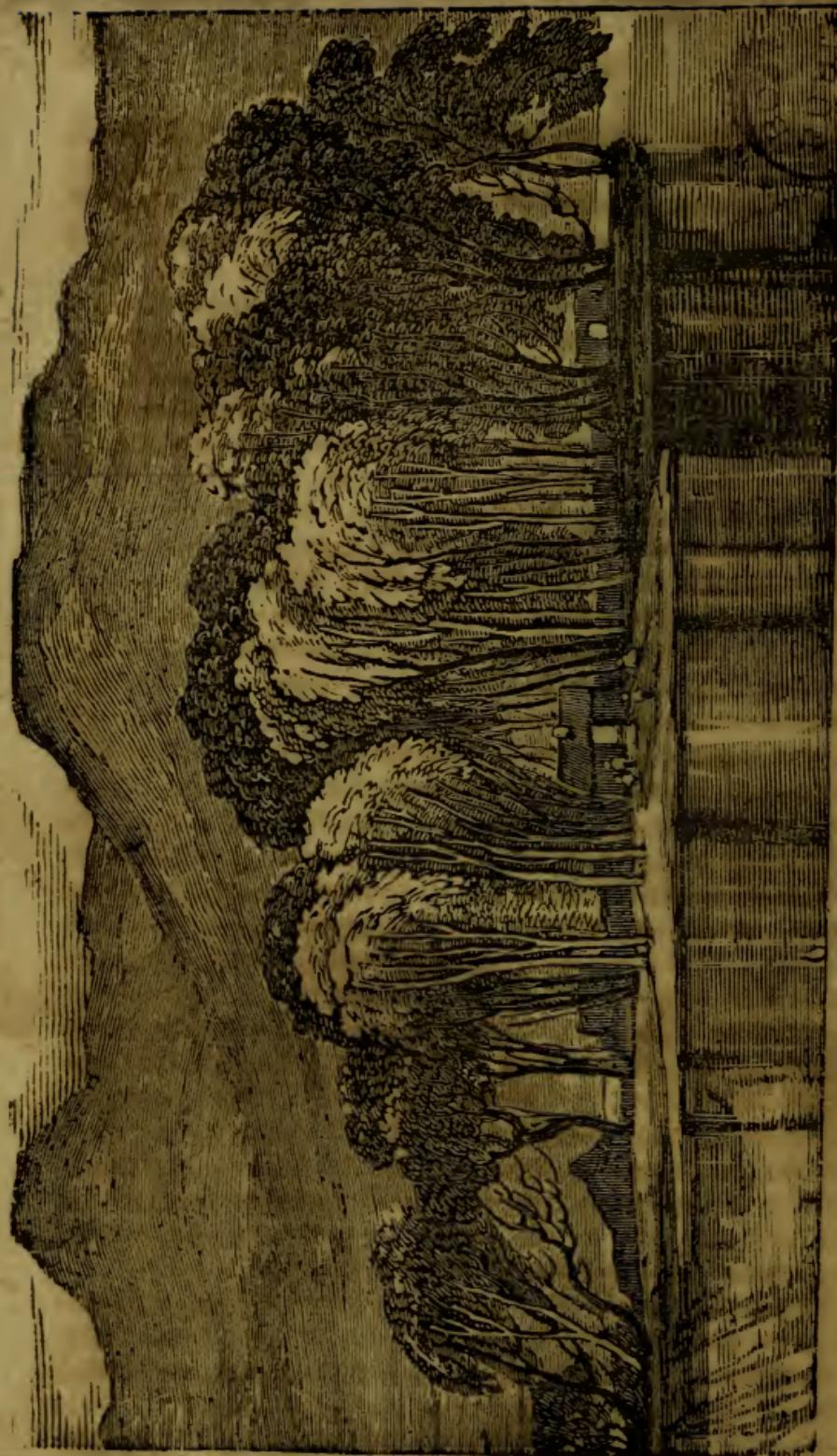
"Mary, asthore," said the mother, "you know you couldn't get a drink of water till after you resave the sacrament.

"I wish, mother dear," said the modest girl, "my father was with me; if he was, I wouldn't be so weak, I think."

This she spoke in a very feeble voice, for all the moral instincts and delicate sensibilities of a modest disposition were up in arms against this profane oblation—this daring intrusion into those recesses of the human heart, which are, and ought to be, visible only to that God to whom all things are known.

At last, by the force of flattery and persuasion, eked out with several melancholy allusions by the mother to her own state of health, Mary went in to comply with an ordinance which she felt to be revolting and indelicate in the highest degree; one which her soul detested and shrank from, with mingled detestation and horror. On her return from the confessional, she walked up to the remote seat she had before occupied, which was instantly vacated on her approach to it; for the beauty of her person, and her modesty, commanded general admiration and respect. There was now a marked change visible in her countenance and demeanour; for although she sat as quiet as usual, there was on her complexion a flush of deeper hue than had mantled her

HERMITAGE OF ST. FINBAR.



Engraved for the "Holy Wells of Ireland."

cheek before ; her eye, too, was lit with a spark, much more vivid than the mild and mellow light which usually shone there. Instead of appearing timid, her nerves were evidently strung to a high degree of firmness and tension, and her whole air betrayed marks of distress, indignation, and disgust. When she came out, her mother went in to confess, who was the last Father Con heard before mass. From the time Mary left Father Con, until breakfast, she was certainly suffering intensely from her own feelings and reflections ; for it was with much difficulty that she suppressed the tears which started to her eyes. Indeed, it was evident that if she had been alone, she would have relieved herself very much by weeping ; but an apprehension of attracting notice restrained her tears, whilst it increased her distress. This state of prolonged excitement was more than she could bear ; for a short time afterwards a powerful re-action in the state of her animal spirits and nerves took place. She became deadly and fearfully pale ; and after many struggles against the weight which sank down her spirits so heavily, she at length fell into a fit of strong and alarming convulsions. This was an interruption to the harmony of the breakfast, which was by no means expected. She was now removed into another room ; the women, with much difficulty, succeeded in restoring her to consciousness, or, at least, in assisting nature to restore herself. When she found herself among none but her own sex, she gave full vent to her tears, and wept long and bitterly. She then insisted on going home to her father, a determination which no force or entreaty could prevent her from putting in execution. She accordingly departed without noticing any one in the house, and the breakfast went on gloomily enough until it was finished.

Such was the effect which the unnatural and gross act of disclosing the frailties and weaknesses of a female to a man in private, had upon the natural modesty of a young woman. To make such an act a religious ceremony, when we consider the weakness of human passion, is probably the best clue to the complacency with

which the Roman Catholic priesthood bear a life of celibacy * * *

“Are you all ready now?” said the priest to a crowd of country people who were standing about the kitchen door, pressing to get the “first turn” at the tribunal, which, on this occasion, consisted of a good oak chair, with his Reverence upon it.

“Why do you crush forward in that manner, you ill-bred spalpeens? Can’t you stand back and behave yourselves like common Christians!—back with you, or, if you make me get my whip, I’ll soon clear you from about the decent man’s door. Haggarty, why do you crush them two girls there, you great Turk you? Look at the vagabonds!—Where’s my whip?” said he, running in, and coming out in a fury, when he commenced cutting about him, until they dispersed in all directions. He then returned into the house; and, after calling in about two dozen, began to catechise them as follows, still holding the whip in his hand, whilst many of those individuals, who, at a party quarrel, in fair or market, or in the more inhuman crimes of murder or nightly depredations, were as callous and hardened specimens of humanity as ever set the laws of civilized society at defiance, stood trembling before him like slaves, absolutely pale and breathless with fear.

“Come, Kelly,” said he to one of them, “are you fully prepared for the two blessed sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, that you are about to receive? Can you read, Sir?”

“Can I read, is id?—my brother *Barney* can, yer Rev’rence,” replied Kelly, sensible, amid all the disadvantages around him, of the degradation of his ignorance.

“What’s that to me, Sir?” said the priest, “what your brother *Barney* can do—can you not read yourself?—and, may be,” he continued parenthetically, “your brother *Barney*’s not much holier for his knowledge.”

“I cannot, yer Reverence,” said Kelly, in a tone of regret.

“I hope you have your Christian Doctrine; at all

events," said the priest,—" Go on with the Confessor."

* * *

It is to be observed here, that, according as the penitents went to be examined, or to kneel down to confess, a certain sum was exacted from each, which varied according to the arrears that might have been due to the priest. Indeed, it is not unusual for the host and hostess, on these occasions, to be refused a participation in the sacrament, until they pay this money, notwithstanding the considerable expense they are put to in entertaining not only the clergy, but a certain number of their own friends and relations.

That a station is an expensive ordinance to the peasant who is honoured by having one held in his house, no one who knows the characteristic hospitality of the Irish people can doubt. I have reason, however, to think, that since the Church of Rome and her discipline have undergone so rigorous a scrutiny by the advocates of scriptural truth, she has been much more cautious in the manner in which they have been conducted. The policy of Romanism has uniformly been, to adapt herself to the circumstances by which she may be surrounded; and as the unbecoming licentiousness, which about twenty, or even so late as fifteen years ago, trod so closely upon the heels of a ceremony which the worship of God and the administration of sacramental rites, should have in a peculiar manner solemnized, was utterly disgraceful and shocking—she felt that it was expedient, as knowledge advanced around her, to practise a greater degree of external decorum and circumspection, lest her *little ones* should be scandalized. This, however, did not render it necessary that she should effect much reformation on this point in those parts of the kingdom which are exclusively Catholic; and accordingly stations, with some exceptions in a certain diocese, go on much in the old manner, as to the expense which they occasion the people to incur, and the jolly convivial spirit which winds them up.

About four o'clock the penitents were at length all despatched; and those who were to be detained for dinner, many of whom had not eaten any thing until

then, in consequence of the necessity of receiving the Eucharist fasting, were taken aside to taste some of Phaddhy's poteen. Of course, no remorse was felt at the impiety of mingling it so soon with the sacrament they had just received, believing, as they did, the latter to contain the immaculate Deity; but, indeed, their Reverences at breakfast had set them a pretty example on that point.

* * * * *

"I'll not go, Con—I tell you I'll not go, till I sing another song. Phaddhy, you're a prince—but where's the use of lighting more candles now, man, than you had in the beginning of the night? Is Captain Wilson gone? Then, peace be with him; it's a pity he wasn't on the right side, for he's not the worst of them. Phaddhy, where are you?

"Why, yer Reverence," replied Katty, "he's got a little unwell, and jist laid down his head a bit."

"Katty," said Father Con, "you had better get a couple of the men to accompany Father Philemy home; for, though the night's clear, he doesn't see his way very well in the dark—poor man, his eye-sight's failing him fast."

"Then, the more's the pity, Father Con. Here, Denis, let yourself and Mat go home wid Father Philemy."

"Good night, Katty," said Father Con—"Good night: and may our blessing *sanctify* you all!"

"Good night, Father Con, ahagur," replied Katty; "and for goodness' sake see that they take care of Father Philemy, for it's himself that's the blessed and holy crathur, and the pleasant gentleman, out and out."

"Good night, Katty," again repeated Father Con, as the cavalcade proceeded in a body—"Good night!" And so ended the station.

* * * We feel it necessary to say, that the foregoing are merely "extracts" from a well connected and powerfully written story, in which many genuine traits of the Irish character are admirably delineated.

DESCRIPTION OF A PATTERN.

FROM CROFTON CROKER'S RESEARCHES IN THE SOUTH OF
IRELAND.

“ A pilgrimage to the source of the river Lee is one frequently performed by two very different classes of persons, the superstitious and the curious; the first led by a traditional sanctity attached to the place, the latter by the reputed sublimity of its scenery, and a desire of witnessing the religious assemblies and ceremonies of the peasantry.

“ The scenery of Gougaun lake is bold and rugged, yet will scarcely afford the artist a suitable return for the labour of his journey. Surrounded by rocky and barren mountains, which rise with an air of desolate grandeur above the lake, in its centre is a small and solitary island, connected with the shore by a narrow artificial causeway, constructed to facilitate the rites of religious devotees, who annually flock thither on the 24th of June, (St. John's day,) to the celebration of a pious festival.

“ The principal building on the island is a rudely formed circular wall of considerable solidity, in the thickness of which are nine arched recesses or cells, called chapels, severally dedicated to particular saints, with a plain flag stone set up in each as an altar.

“ In the centre of this enclosure, on a grassy elevation, that appears to have been formerly surrounded by stone steps, stands a wooden pole, the upright remains of a large cross, braced with many pieces of iron. Hundreds of votive rags and bandages are nailed against it, and hung upon it, by those whose faith has made them whole, intended as acknowledgments of their cure. Also the spencels of cattle that have been driven through the lake, as a preventive against the murrain.

“ My first visit to Gougaun lake was on the 23d of June, 1813, the eve of St. John. Feeling a strong wish

to be present at the celebration of an Irish patron, or religious meeting in remembrance of a particular saint—a mere boy at the time, I had toiled through a long and an arduous walk in company with one whose pen would more ably than mine have done justice to the scene.

“ For the last three miles, our road, or rather path, was up the side of steep acclivities, thence upon ranges of stone steps, over dreary mountainous swamps, and we were frequently obliged to quit the common track, in order to seek amongst the rushes for more secure footing. Large blocks of schistus rock lay scattered around, many of which at a little distance appeared like vast ruins ; nor was there one tree or bush within view to destroy the appearance of entire neglect and desolation. After a walk of about seven Irish miles from the village of Inchgeela, we gained the brow of a mountain, and beheld the lake of Gouaun with its little wooded island beneath us ; one spot on its shore, swarming with people, appeared, from our elevated situation, to be a dark mass surrounded by moving specks, which continually merged into it. On our descent we caught the distant and indistinct murmur of the multitude ; and as we approached and forded the eastern extremity of the lake, where its waters discharge themselves through a narrow and precipitous channel, an unseemly uproar burst upon us, though at a distance of nearly half a mile from the assembly. It was not without difficulty that we forced our way through the crowd on the shore of the lake, to the wall of the chapels on the island, where we stood amid an immense concourse of people : the interior of the cells were filled with men and women in various acts of devotion, almost all of them on their knees ; some, with hands uplifted, prayed in loud voices, using considerable gesticulation, and others, in a less noisy manner, rapidly counted the beads of their rosary, or, as it is called by the Irish peasant, their pathereen, with much apparent fervour ; or as a substitute for beads, threw from one hand into the other, small pebbles to mark the number of prayers they had repeated ; whilst such of them as were not furnished with other

means kept their reckoning by cutting a notch on their cudgel, or on a piece of stick provided for the purpose.

" To a piece of rusty iron, shaped thus, considerable importance seems to have been attached ; it passed from one devotee to another with much ceremony. The form consisted in placing it three times with a short prayer, across the head of the nearest person, to whom it was then handed, and who went through the same ceremony with the next to him, and thus it circulated from one to another.

" The crowd in the chapels every moment increasing, it became a matter of labour to force our way towards the shore, through the throng that covered the causeway. Adjoining the causeway, part of the water of the lake was inclosed and covered in as a well, by which name it was distinguished. On gaining the well we observed a man, apparently of mendicant order, describing on a particular stone in its wall, the figure of a cross, with a small piece of slate, which he afterwards sold to such devotees as were desirous of possessing these relics.*



* " Small printed papers were also sold at the meetings ; one which I purchased is copied verbatim.

" TAKEN FROM THE WRITINGS OF IRISH CLERGYMEN.

" *COPY of a PRAYER to be said at the WELL of ST. JOHN'S.*

" O ALMIGHTY GOD, as I have undertaken this journey by way of Pilgrimage in and through a penitential spirit,

“ The number of slates thus treated at various periods, had worn in the stone to which they were applied a cross nearly two inches in depth, and which every sign served to deepen. The door or opening to the front of the well was so narrow as scarce to admit two persons at the same time. Within, the well was crowded to excess, probably seven or eight persons, some with their arms, some with their legs trust down into the water, exhibiting the most disgusting sores and shocking infirmities. When those within came out, their places were as instantly filled by others. Some there were who had waited two or three hours before they could obtain access to this ‘healing fount.’ The blind, the cripple, and the infirm jostled and retarded each other in their efforts to approach; whilst women and boys forced their way about, offering the polluted water of the well for sale, in little glass bottles, the bottom of broken jugs and scallop shells, to those whose strength did not permit them to gain this sacred spot. The water so offered was eagerly purchased, in some instances applied to the diseased part, and in others drank with the eagerness of enthusiasm. In the crowd, mothers stood with their naked children in their arms, anxiously waiting the

in the first place, I hope to render myself worthy of the favour I mean to ask, to avoid drunkenness, and licentiousness, and hope to find favour in thy sight. I therefore pay this tribute and fulfil the promise I have made, I ask you, therefore, through the intercession of Saint JOHN, to grant me the following favour—(here mention the particular favour you stand in need of)—I know how unworthy I am of being heard, but I resolve, with thy gracious assistance, henceforward to render myself worthy of your favour, I implore this gift, through the intercession of Saint John, and the sufferings of Christ our Lord. Amen.

“ N.B.—You must be careful to avoid all excess in drinking—dancing in tents—for it is impossible characters can find favour in the sight of God, such as these.—Fasting going there had formerly been the custom.”

moment when an opening might allow them to plunge their struggling and shrieking infants into the waters of the well. Were this all, I could have beheld the assembly with feelings of devotion mixed with regret at their infatuation and delusion ; but drunken men and the most depraved women mingled with those whose ideas of piety brought them to this spot ; and a confused uproar of prayers and oaths, of sanctity and blasphemy, sounded in the same instant on the ear.

“ We left this scene, so calculated to excite compassion and horror, and turned towards the lake, where whiskey, porter, bread, and salmon were sold in booths or tents resembling a gipsy encampment, and formed by means of poles or branches of trees meeting at angles, over which were thrown the proprietor’s great coat, his wife’s cloak, old blankets, quilts, and occasionally a little straw. Above the entrance of each was suspended the name of the owner, if he happened to possess a license ; when this was not the case, a jug, a bottle, or pipe were displayed to indicate that spirits and porter might be had within, and not unfrequently were added a piece of ribbon, and an old shoe, the first to distinguish some popular party, the latter emblematic of dancing, to which amusement the lower orders of Irish are immoderately attached.

“ Almost every tent had its piper, and two or three young men and women dancing the jig, or a peculiar kind of dance, called the rinkafadah, which consists of movements by no means graceless or inelegant. The women invariably selected their partners, and went up to the man of their choice, to whom they freely presented their hand. After the dance was concluded, the men dropped a penny each, or, such as were inclined to display their liberality, something more, into an old hat which lay at the piper’s feet, or in a hollow made in the ground for the purpose. The piper, who seldom makes a moment’s pause, continues playing, and another dance immediately commences.

“ The tents are generally so crowded that the dancers have scarcely room for their performance ; from twenty

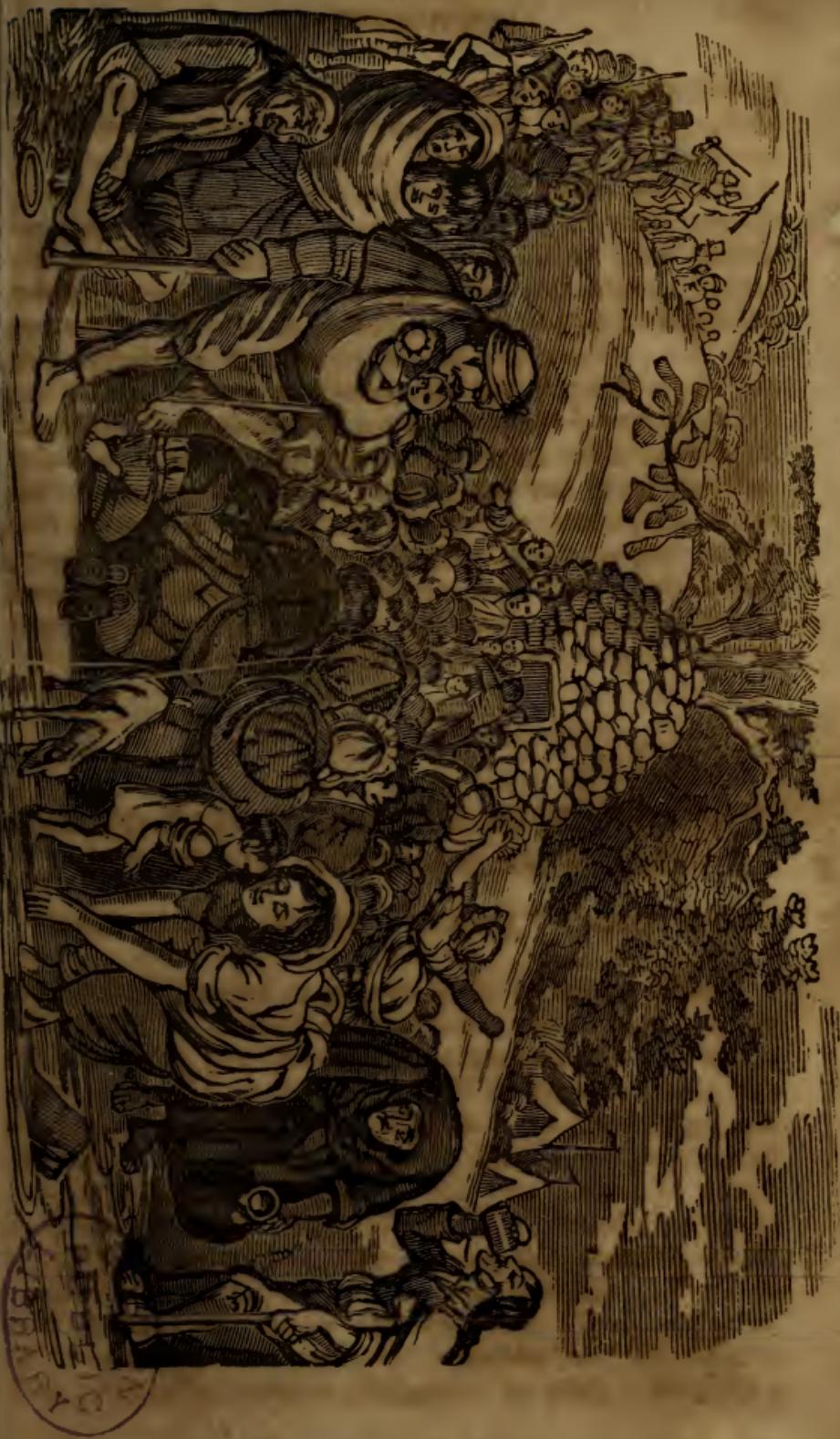
to thirty men and women are often huddled together in each, and the circulation of porter and whiskey amongst the various groups is soon evident in its effects. All become actors,—none spectators,—rebellious songs, in the Irish language, are loudly vociferated, and received with yells of applause: towards evening the tumult increases, and intoxication becomes almost universal. Cudgels are brandished, the shrieks of women and the piercing cry of children thrill painfully upon the ear in the riot and uproar of the scene; indeed the distraction and tumult of a patron cannot be described. At midnight the assembly became somewhat less noisy and confused, but the chapels were still crowded: on the shore people lay ‘heads and points’ so closely that it was impossible to move without trampling on them; the washing and bathing in the well still continued, and the dancing, drinking, roaring, and singing were, in some degree, kept up throughout the night.”

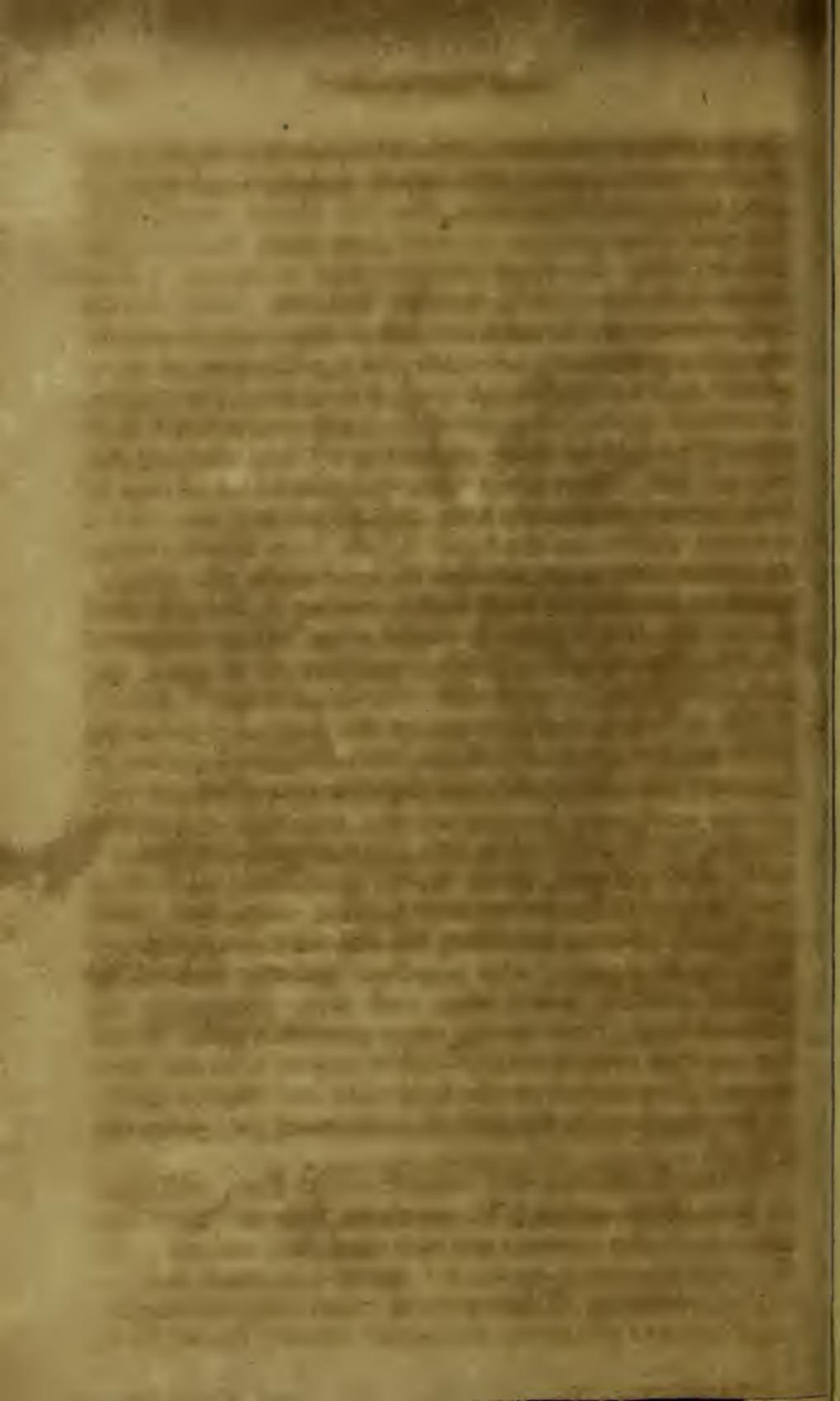
DESCRIPTION OF A PATTERN HELD ON THE SUMMIT OF MAMTURK MOUNTAIN.

FROM INGLIS'S “TOUR THROUGH IRELAND IN 1834.”

I had frequently, since coming to Ireland, heard of a *pattern* being held; and had been asked, if I had seen a pattern? It fortunately happened, that on the second day of my sojourn at Ma'am, a very celebrated pattern was to be held, on a singular spot, high up amongst the mountains, on a little plain, on the top of the pass between Mamturk and the neighbouring mountain,—an elevation of about 1200 feet;—and I, of course, resolved to be present. A pattern was, originally, a religious ceremony, and was, and still is, always celebrated near to a holy well: but although some still frequent the pattern for devotional purposes, it is now resorted to, chiefly as a place of recreation, where, after the better

A P A T T E R N D A Y.





disposed have partaken of the innocent amusements of dancing and moderate hilarity, drunkenness and fighting wind up the entertainment.

I was accompanied, in my excursions, by the inn-keeper; and the road being rather toilsome, I was accommodated with a horse. This, however, was a luxury which I was soon obliged to disencumber myself of; for a great part, or rather, by far the greater part of the road being through bogs, I soon found the horse to be a dangerous companion, and was glad to leave him behind, at a cabin door, and make my way through the bog on foot. It requires some practice to be an expert bog-trotter; to know where one may safely rest one's weight; where one must slip lightly from tuft to tuft; and where one must not risk an advance at all. I had some experience of bogs before coming to Ireland, and proved so apt a learner in bog-trotting, that, during the whole of my journey, I never committed so great an error of judgment as to sink even knee-deep.

The ascent to the spot where the pattern was to be held, was picturesque in the extreme. Far up the winding way, for miles before us, and for miles behind too, groups were seen moving up the mountain side,—the women; with their red petticoats, easily distinguished: some were on foot, some few on horseback, and some rode double. About half-way up, we overtook a party of lads and lasses, beguiling the toil of the ascent, by the help of a piper, who marched before; and whose stirring strains, every now and then prompted an advance in jig-time, up the steep mountain path. Some few we met coming away,—sober people, who had performed their *station* at the holy well, and had no desire to be partakers in the sort of amusement that generally follows.

When I reached the summit of the Pass, and came in sight of the ground, it was about four in the afternoon, and the pattern was in its height: and truly, in this wild mountain spot, the scene was most striking and picturesque. There were a score tents or more,—some open at the sides, and some closed; hundreds in

groups were seated on the grass, or on the stones, which lie abundantly there. Some old persons were yet on their knees, beside the holy well, performing their devotions ; and here and there apart, and half-screened by the masses of rocks which lay about, girls of the better order, who had finished their pastimes, were putting off their shoes and stockings to trot homeward ; or were arranging their dress ; or perhaps,—though more rarely,—exchanging a word or two with a Joyce, or a Cunnemara boy. All was quiet when I reached the ground ; and I was warmly welcomed as a stranger, by many, who invited me into their tents. Of course, I accepted the invitation ; and the pure potheen circulated freely.

* * *

I had seen abundance of fighting on a small scale, in Ireland ; but, I confess, I had been barbarous enough to wish I might see a regular faction fight ; and now I was likely to be gratified. Taking the hint of the inn-keeper, I shook hands with the “boys” nearest to me, right and left ; and taking advantage of a sudden burst of voices, I stepped over my bench, and, retiring from my tent, took up a safe position on some neighbouring rocks.

I had not long to wait : out sallied the Joyces, and a score of other “boys,” from several tents at once, as if there had been some preconcerted signal ; and the flourishing of shillelahs did not long precede the using of them.

* * * *

TUBBER MAC-DUACH.



We insert the following as a specimen of the numerous blessed wells throughout the country :

The place called *Tubber-macduach*, or *Tobar Mhic Duach*, 'the well of Duach's son,' is situate about a quarter of a mile from Kinvarra, in the county of Galway, on the Loughrea side. Here is a small spring

of water, neatly walled in, and shaded by a few hawthorns, in blighted contrast with the verdure of which there appears in the background the remains of a blasted and withered ash, whose aspect indicates that it has long stood companion to the holy fountain. The upper wall, apparently of recent erection, is in form a square of about seven feet to the side, having a small stile for the more easy admission of pilgrims. Beneath the square wall is another of a circular form, fencing in the whole, as represented in the annexed cut.

On the left hand side as you enter by the stile, you find in the interior of the upper wall a small niche, intended for holding a cup, and also serving as a receptacle for the offerings of devotees. Unfortunately for the guardians of the place, however, such tributes now consist of nothing more than a few worthless rags, brass pins, and the like.

In reference to the idea thrown out in the preface that the various Stations and Holy Wells throughout Ireland are remnants of Heathen superstitions, it is considered only necessary to allude to the fact, well known to every classic reader, that the entire countries of ancient Greece and Italy abounded with trees and springs, consecrated to their imaginary deities, who were supposed particularly to delight in groves and fountains of water; and who, resorting thither to disport or enjoy themselves, rendered the locality sacred by their presence; and that in these places such of the people as wished to ensure their favour or protection, used to hang garlands upon the trees, and leave offerings of wine, milk, and honey; fancying also that any sudden misfortune or sickness, either to themselves, their families, or their cattle, was produced by the anger

of those inferior deities, they hoped, by attendance at their favourite places of resort, and the offerings they made them, to appease their wrath, and thus to induce them to remove the visitation. In those various particulars we find an exact counterpart of the proceedings which take place at many of the holy wells in Ireland;*

* In reference to a Holy Well situated in Castle Connel near Limerick, Mr. Inglis says, “ I went as far as a holy well, dedicated to St. Senanus. Judging from what I saw, it must be in high repute; for hundreds of little wooden vessels lay heaped in and above it, the offerings of those who had come to drink; and the trees that over-shadowed the well were entirely covered with shreds of all colours—bits and clippings of gowns, and handkerchiefs, and petticoats,—remembrances also of those who drank. These, I believe, are the title-deeds to certain exemptions, or benefits, claimed by those who thus deposit them in the keeping of the patron saint, who is supposed to be thus reminded of the individuals whose penances might otherwise have been overlooked. I noticed among the offerings, some strings of beads and a few locks of hair.”—See also Crofton Croker’s Account, p. 48.

Speaking of St. Patrick’s Purgatory, Lough Dearg, Stanhurst, in his History of Ireland, says, “ The place there was in like manner as it is now in the time of Paganism, and was long before St. Patrick’s days—and it seemeth to be after the manner of concavities in the bowels of the earth, where the air entering naturally to avoid vacuum, and the wind whistleth and cryeth like doleful ghosts, the silly and ignorant simple people being deceived, through the perswasion of covetous priests, that some souls and spirits do remain there for their sins, call it a purgatorie. And further, we see by reason and daily experience in miners, that if any such be under ground, the dampness of the earth takes away their lively colour, and makes them look ghastly, and if they continue any long while there, (the vital spirits being barred of their usual course,) they are mightily tormented, cast into trances, and distracted; and being once delivered from the place, report things at random of heaven and earth, believe them who list.”

the trees around which are constantly covered with rags and ribbons—offerings to the tutelary saint—and where, at particular seasons, numbers of persons may be seen driving in their diseased horses and other cattle, in the hope of their being restored to health by the intercession of the saint.

The following extracts from an article on the subject, by a late intelligent writer, the Rev. Charles O'Connor, will not, we are sure, be deemed uninteresting. It will be found in his third letter of Columbanus, and is addressed to his brother, the late Owen O'Conor Don :

“ I have often inquired of your tenants, what they themselves thought of their pilgrimages to the wells of *Kil-Archt*, *Tobbar-Brighde*, *Tobbar Muire*, near Elphin, and *Moore*, near Castlereagh, where multitudes assembled annually to celebrate what they, in broken English, termed Patterns (Patron's days) ; and when I pressed a very old man, Owen Hester, to state what possible advantage he expected to derive from the singular custom of frequenting in particular such wells as were contiguous to an old blasted oak, or an upright unhewn stone, and what the meaning was of the yet more singular custom of sticking rags on the branches of such trees, and spitting on them—his answer, and the answer of the oldest men, was, that their ancestors always did it ; that it was a preservative against *Geasa-Draoidacht*, i. e. the sorceries of Druids ; that their cattle were preserved by it from infections and disorders ; that the *daoini maethe*, i. e. the fairies, were kept in good humour by it ; and so thoroughly persuaded were they of the sanctity of those pagan practices, that they would travel bare-headed and bare-footed, from ten to twenty miles, for the purpose of crawling on their knees round these wells, and upright stones, and oak trees, westward, as the sun travels, some three times, some six, some nine, and so on, in uneven numbers, until their voluntary penances were completely fulfilled. The waters of Lough-Con were

deemed so sacred from ancient usage, that they would throw into the lake whole rolls of butter, as a preservative of the milk of their cows against *Geasa-Draoid-eacht!*

“ The same customs existed among the Irish colonies of the Highlands and Western Islands ; and even in some parts of the Lowlands of Scotland. ‘ I have often observed,’ says Mr. Brand. ‘ shreds, or bits of rags, upon the bushes that overhang a well in the road to Benton, near Newcastle, which is called the Rag-well.’ Mr. Pennant says ‘ they visit the Spye, in Scotland, for many distempers, and the well of Drachaldy, for as many, offering small pieces of money and bits of rags.’

“ From my earliest days, I recollect having expressed my wonder at these customs of our countrymen ; and our good Dr. M’Dermot, of Coolavin, will recollect a conversation on this subject, in which he agreed, that they are of Phœnician origin, and contribute, with many other proofs, to demonstrate the progress of population from the East to the West.

“ ‘ The worship of fountains,’ says Stanley, ‘ may be traced to the Chaldeans. Besides the three orders of Intellectuals, which Psellus styles seven fountains, and the anonymous Summarist, Fountainous Fathers, the latter gives an account of many other fountains ; and they reverence, saith he, material fountains, and next after these the principalities.’

“ A passage from Hanway’s Travels, leads directly to the oriental origin of these Druidical superstitions : ‘ We arrived at a desolate Caravanserai, where we found nothing but water. I observed a tree with a number of rags to the branches. These were so many charms which passengers coming from Ghilaw, a province remarkable for agues, had left there, in a fond expectation of leaving their disease also in the same spot.’

“ It is remarkable, that well-worshipping exists now in no part of Italy, where it is abolished by Christianity ; and yet it exists amongst the clan *hua Bhascoine* of Ireland, as it existed anciently amongst the *Vascons* and other tribes of Iberia, from whom the ancient Irish

Bhascons are undoubtedly derived. Gruter gives an inscription, 'Vasconiae in Hispania, *Fonti divino*.'

"The connection of this worship with the historical traditions of the Pagan Irish is so evident and so extensive that it affords a subject of useful and pleasing discovery, as it strongly illustrates the Mosiac account of the progre of population from the plains of Sennaar to the Western extremities of Europe, and exposes in a very forcible manner, the futility of those ridiculous systems, by which Bailly and the French Revolutionists have endeavonred to account for the origin of man tracing his progress from N. to S. in direct opposition to all the histories, all the traditions, and all the vestiges of of ancient nations !

"The well-worship of the *Sceligs* on the coast of Kerry, in that part of Ireland which was first invaded from Spain, is accurately described by Smith, but without any attempt to account for its origin, or to trace its antiquity.

"S. Michael's Well, near Ballynascelig on the coast of Kerry, is visited annually, every 29th of September, by a great concourse of people, some of whom bring their sick, blind, and lame friends to be healed by this miraculous water.* Now, S. Michael's festival,

* Smith's *Kerry*, p. 103 and 113.—Keating is good authority for the existence of the *Scelig* pilgrimages in his own times. *Eochoid*, an Irish bard of the 9th century, whose compositions, in the Irish language of that period, are preserved in the Marquis of Buckingham's library, says, that Ir, the son of *Mil-Espaine*, one of the leaders who conducted the Scotti from Spain to Ireland, was wrecked on this island. Smith mentions the miraculous well of Glen-ore, in his *Corke*, l. l. p. 351—'Over it is a large old tree, on the boughs of which an infinite number of rags of all colours are tied.'

The same takes place at *Ball*, or *Baal*, in the County of Mayo, where are two small chapels vaulted over the river which runs through the town, where immense swarms of people attend on the same day, and perform circuits on their knees in expiation of their sins, and conclude the day with feasting. It is said not less than 300 sheep are consumed on these occa-

(September 29th,) concurs with the autumnal eqinox, and consequently with the autumnal sacrifices and *Baal-tinnes* of the Druids ; and it is observable that the largest of the Scelig Islands of that coast, wherein are two sacred wells, the most celebrated, perhaps, of all Ireland, is named Scelig Michael, or S. Michael's Scelig ; that the sacred promontory, called the Scillean, in Greece has been also dedicated to S. Michael, and is now called Cape S. Angelo ; and that many other craggy promontories, formerly celebrated for Druidic sacrifices of human offerings made to the Devil, and for lustrations and wells of Druidic worship, have been, by the foundations of monasteries on them, dedicated to S. Michael, to abolish the Pagan rites and ideas which they recalled. Such was S. Michael's Mount, near Penzance, in Cornwall ; and such S. Michael's, on the coast of Armorican Britanny, dedicated to S. Michael in the 6th century.

“ The ruins of the monastery of Scelig Michael, much more ancient than those of Ballynascelig, are mentioned by Giraldus, and are yet visible on a flat in the centre of the Island, about fifty feet above the level of the sea. This flat consists of about three Irish acres, and here are several cells of stone, closed and jointed without any cement, impervious to the wind, and covered in with circular stone arches. Here also are the two clear fountains, where the pilgrims, who, on the 29th of September, visited the Island in great numbers, repeated stationary prayers, preparatory to their higher ascent.

The Island is, as Keating truly states, an immense rock, composed of high and almost innaccessible precipices, which hang dreadfully over the sea ; having but one very narrow track leading to the top, and of such difficult ascent that few are so hardy as to attempt it. The Druidic pilgrim, however, having made his votive offering at the sacred wells, proceeded to adore the sacred

sions. It is to be observed that this worship of Baal is held on the day of one of his great festivals—the autumnal equinox !!—*Gael and Cymbri*, by Sir Wm. Betham.

stone at the summit of the most lofty precipice on the Island.

"At the height of about 150 feet above the level of the sea, he squeezed through a hollow chasm, resembling the funnel of a chimney, and named the Needle's Eye, an ascent extremely difficult even to persons who proceed barefooted, though there are holes cut into the rock for the purpose of facilitating the attempt. When this obstacle is surmounted a new one occurs: for the only track to the summit is by an horizontal flat, not above a yard wide, which projects over the sea, and is named in Irish, *leac an dočra*, the stone of pain. The difficulty of clinging to this stone is very great, even when the weather is calm; but when there is any wind, as is commonly the case, the danger of slipping, or of being blown off, united with the dizziness occasioned by the immense perpendicular height, above the level of the sea, is such as imagination only can picture. When this projecting rock, about twelve feet in height, is surmounted, the remaining to the highest peak is less difficult. But then two stations of tremendous danger remain to be performed. The first is termed the station of the Eagle's Nest, where a stone cross was substituted by the Monks for the unhewn stone, the object of Druidic worship, which required the previous lustrations and ablutions of the sacred wells. Here, if the reader will fancy a man perched on the summit of a smooth slippery pinnacle, and poised in air about 450 feet above the level of the sea, beholding a vast expanse of ocean westward, and eastward the Kerry mountains, which he overlooks, he may form some idea of the superstitious awe, which such tremendous Druidic rites were calculated to inspire; and yet many pilgrims have proceeded from this frightful pinnacle to the second—the most whimsical, as well as the most dangerous that even Druidic superstition ever suggested. It consists of a narrow ledge of rock, which projects from the pinnacle already mentioned, so as to form with it the figure of an inverted letter T, projecting horizontally from the very apex of the pinnacle sev-

ral feet, * itself not being above two feet broad ! This ledge projects so far, as to enable him who would venture on it to see the billows at the distance of 460 feet in perpendicular, and the sea here is 90 feet deep, so that the largest man of war may ride in safety at anchor underneath ; and yet to this extreme end the pilgrim proceeded astride upon this ledge, until, quite at its utmost verge, he kissed a cross, which some bold adventurer dared to cut into it, as an antidote to the superstitious practices of pagan times !

“ On the introduction of Christianity, the name and the festivals of the Druidic divinity, his human sacrifices and horrid rites, were abolished, and the worship of S. Michael Archangel was substituted on these lofty Sceligs in their stead, he being considered the chief of heavenly spirits, in opposition to the Baal of the Druids.

“ From these historical fragments it appears that the well-worshipping of the Irish Sceligs, inhabited by the clan *hua Bhascoine* of Southern Ireland, was derived through their ancestors, the *Vascons* or *Biscayans* of Iberia, from the Phœnician colonies who stretch along the coasts of Europe to Ireland, as expressly stated in the Annals of Phœnicia.”*

CONCLUSION.

Having thus given the reader some idea of the origin of well-worship, and produced what we think must be considered satisfactory proof of the charges advanced in the introductory portion of this pamphlet, in reference to the Holy Wells, Patterns, and Stations being a disgrace to the age and the country in which we live, we think it would be a mere waste of words, a work of supererogation, to attempt any farther proof that they

* Any person wishing for further information, will find the subject treated of at considerable length in “ *The Gael and Cymbri*, ” by Sir Wm. Betham, F.R.S., &c.

are the source of much of the immorality and vice which at present so alarmingly prevail; and nearly as useless to attempt to demonstrate that on the Priests of Rome must the entire blame be laid, of allowing such abominations still to exist. While they continue to officiate for the people at such places as Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Dearg, and to draw large revenues for their services, it is surely altogether idle to say that they do not countenance or approve of the deeds performed on such occasions.

As, however, it might still be asserted by some, that pilgrimages to the shrines of saints are not now sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church, although apparently countenanced by individuals of that church, we quote the following from one of the Catechisms at present in use throughout the country, entitled, "An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine, with proofs of Scripture for points controverted," *permissu superiorum.*†

Q. How prove you that pilgrimages to holy places, as to Mount Calvary, Mount Tabor, and the sepulchre of Christ, are laudable and pious practices?

* A respectable Roman Catholic Prelate, Dr. Bray, of Cashel, speaking of a Patron in his diocese, observed "It is become such a scene of drunkenness and quarrelling, and of other most abominable vices, that religion herself is brought into disrepute, nay, mocked and ridiculed; intemperance and immorality are encouraged; the tranquillity of the country is disturbed, and the seeds of perpetual animosities and dissensions are sown."—*Stat. et Lyn. ecc. Cassel, et Im. p. 72, 230.*

† Printed by John Coyne, 74, Cook-street, Printer and Bookseller to the General Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

A.—First out of Deut. xvi. 16, when God himself commanded, that thrice a year all the people should come up to Jerusalem, to adore, and make their offering to him. Secondly, the example of Christ himself, our blessed Lady and St. Joseph, who went up to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the Pasch. St. Luke ii. 41. Thirdly, out of Acts viii. 27, 28, when the Ethiopian Eunuch, going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, was in his return converted and baptised by St. Philip, so pleasing was his pilgrimage to God. Finally, because it was foretold by the prophets, that those places which Christ sanctified by his passion, should be of pious resort and adoration : “ We will adore (saith David) in the place where his feet stood.” Psalm cxxxii. 7; and in Isaiah xi. 10, we read, “ To him shall the Gentiles pray, and his sépulchre shall be glorious.”

Q.—How do you prove it lawful to go on pilgrimages to the shrines of saints ?

A.—Because, as you have read already, their relics are holy and venerable things, and God is pleased to work great cures and miracles by them, for such as are devout honourers of them.

Q.—Is there any power now in the Church to do miracles ?

A.—There is, according to that unlimited promise of Christ. Them that believe (in me) these signs follow : “ In my name they shall cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall be whole.”

Q.—Have these things been done in latter ages ?

A.—They have, and are, as you may see in the unquestioned histories and records of all Catholic countries ; where many great miracles are wrought by the servants of God, and especially at pilgrimages and shrines of saints, are yearly registered under the depositions of eye witnesses, men above all exceptions, which cannot be denied, unless we deny all history.

Such are the doctrines taught and enjoined on those belonging to the Church of Rome, in reference to the

benefit of stations and pilgrimages, and in consequence of which, as rewards for the same, it appears *indulgences* are granted to those who perform them. Of the value placed on these latter, a tolerably fair estimate may be formed from the following extract from the Rev. Dr. James Butler's Catechism, which has for a length of time been used as a general catechism throughout the entire country :

(Page 51.) Q.—What does the Church teach concerning indulgences ?

A.—That Christ gave power to the Church to grant indulgences ; and that they are most useful to Christian people. Conc. Trid. xi. 25.

Q.—What is the use of an indulgence ?

A.—It releases from canonical penances, enjoined by the Church on penitents, for certain sins.

(Page 51 and 52.) Q.—When the Church grants indulgences, what does it offer to God to supply our weakness and insufficiency, and in satisfaction for our sins ?

A.—The merits of Christ which are infinite and superabundant, together with the virtues and good works of his Virgin mother, and of all his saints.

As a further proof that “*indulgences*” are still sanctioned by the Roman Catholic hierarchy here, we quote, verbatim, the following circular, issued at the date mentioned, by Dr. Murray, the present Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It will, moreover, serve to show the connecting link between the various ceremonies and observances enjoined by the Church of Rome :

“ In virtue of a Brief of His Holiness, Pope Leo XII., dated 20th June, 1824, and beginning with the words, “*Cum nos nuper*,”—all the indulgences, whether plenary or others, granted in favour of the living, are suspended during the present year, 1825, except only

those which are granted for the recitation of the *Angelus*, those which are granted in the article of death, and a few others, which are not generally applicable to this country. All the Indulgences, however, which have been until now available for the living, may this year be obtained and applied, by way of suffrage, for the faithful departed, even though this privilege be not mentioned in the original grant.

“ † D. MURRAY.

 “Please announce the above at your respective Masses.”

I have been thus minute in these latter circumstances, in order to show that pilgrimages to the holy wells, and the various other stations and patterns which take place throughout the country, are not resorted to in order to gratify the mere whim or caprice of the individuals who attend them, as some would have us suppose, but are performed either as a penance enforced by the priest—as a means of obtaining the *indulgences* to which I have alluded, or to use Dr. Murray’s language, “as a suffrage for the faithful departed,”—who, although accounted “faithful,” it evidently follows, from the terms employed, are still enduring “*the pains of purgatory*,” for otherwise the suffrages would be of no avail to them. The entire demonstrates that they are still retained as a portion of the machinery by which the Church of Rome endeavours to keep her followers in vassalage.—And now, having thus plainly, and I do think satisfactorily, proved the various positions laid down, I would simply, in conclusion, turn to the educated and enlightened inhabitants of Great Britain, and more especially to the editors and conductors of the periodical press, and ask them, whether I have not shown that I had good grounds for

making the present appeal; and whether it be not more philanthropic, more befitting an individual who wishes well to his country, and who feels perfectly satisfied that the practices of which he complains are one great source of the many evils which still continue to afflict the people,—instead of remaining a quiet and unconcerned spectator of what is passing around him, thus to come forward, and boldly charge home upon the individuals who have it in their power to suppress those practices, yet still neglect the duty, the great criminality of their conduct: and I make this appeal in the hope that some influential persons will take up the subject, and express their opinion upon it. I know it is said by some, who would arrogate to themselves peculiar *liberality*, that Protestants have nothing to do with the religious practices of their neighbours of the Roman Catholic Church. I deny the position. It is at once unchristian and unscriptural: for while I would wish to cherish the best feelings towards all men, of every denomination, I hold it to be the bounden duty of every man to render his neighbour and his country a service, if it lie within his power to do so; and that in no way could this be better done than by an endeavour to suppress those heathenish abominations, which are a disgrace to any civilized or Christian people.

Under this impression I have been induced to bring forward the subject of the foregoing pages, and would solemnly call on the Roman Catholic Priests to consider, that by allowing their people to remain under the gross delusion, that such pilgrimages and penances as those to which reference has been made, are acceptable in the

sight of God, they are either acting the part of "blind leaders of the blind;" or what is much worse, are, with their own eyes open, countenancing the people under their charge in practices which are calculated not only to destroy the body but the soul, and are thus leading them to everlasting perdition. If the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient to save the poor sinner who repents, why allow him to try to save himself by such *painful performances* as could only please *a deity who delighted in the misery of his creatures?* If the "blood of the Lord Jesus cleanseth from all sin," as we are informed in the word of God, why allow the poor ignorant people to believe that their vain ablutions at holy wells can cleanse them from their sins? If the religion of the Lord Jesus—the Christian religion—is a religion of the most perfect purity and morality, why countenance the multitudes who visit holy wells, patterns, and stations, in their gross debauchery and drunkenness? or why not exercise the authority possessed by the priesthood to put a stop to such unholy practices? In putting these questions, I again repeat I am alone actuated by a desire to promote the happiness and the well-being of my countrymen. I conceive I have only spoken as a rational being should speak; and I do trust that from the statements I have given, the attention of some of the intelligent portion of the Church of Rome will be turned to the subject, in such a way as to have the disgraceful proceedings complained of, effectually suppressed; and that it will also have the effect of leading some of those who may heretofore have been led to believe that such practices are acceptable in the sight of

God, to reflect on the folly and absurdity of their conduct, and ultimately to rest their hopes of acceptance on the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

APPENDIX.

Extraordinary account of a deed of deep and diabolical revenge, perpetrated at St. Patrick's Purgatory, during the 14th century.

We copy the following curious story from the 208th Number of the "Dublin Penny Journal," as affording a fair illustration of the purposes and intentions under which pilgrimages to *St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Dearg*, were undertaken in the earlier ages. Although founded on facts, we give the story merely as a traditional record.

Lough Dearg, or St. Patrick's Purgatory, was at one time the most famous shrine of penance and purification in Europe. It was by no means an unusual thing for princes from foreign countries to travel from their palace-homes, in the vain hope of finding rest for their troubled consciences in the performances of a pilgrimage to this island cell. Such repute did this western Purgatory acquire, that a number of high dignitaries of the church in Italy and other countries, who felt certain bequests and revenues diminishing, began to regard its fame with jealous eyes; and shortly after the circumstances related in the following tale had taken place, a Bull was procured from his Holiness for its total suppression.

In the year 1597 we find it recorded that his most gracious Majesty Richard the Second, King of England, &c. &c. granted his royal letters of safe-conduct to Raymond, Viscount Perrilleaux, and Knight of Rhodes, with a train of twenty men and thirty horses,

to the place of penance, called Lough Dearg, in the kingdom of Ireland, for the purpose of performing certain religious duties. It is also recorded that the knightly nobleman never returned to his native country or kindred. Thus far for the introductory part of our narrative; what follows is said to have been gleaned from a document found, many years after, in the Birmingham Tower, Dublin Castle.

It was a beautiful and sunny evening in the beginning of the autumn of the above year, and the floods of rich yellow light from the setting sun bathed the woody shores of Lough Dearg, and tipped with gold the wavelets on its bosom. At that period the naked hills that now surround the lake were covered with majestic woods of oak and beech, intermingled with hazel and birch, and fringed with thick copse almost to the water's edge. The little isle on which was situated Saint Patrick's Purgatory lay a short distance from the shore, with its shadowed side, towards the point of embarkation, like a dark spot in the midst of a field of flowing silver.

Teague O'Dogherty, the ferryman to the island, was stretched at his length upon a mossy bank above the surface of the water; his little wherry lay at a small distance, like a dark log floating upon the limpid element. It was moored by a knotted tow-rope to a stump in the bank. From some cause or other, there was a great dearth of pilgrims at the sainted shrine, at this particular season, and Teague had little else to do but loll about from bank to shade, or fish with his long hazel rod in the Lough. While he thus lay, admiring the setting sun, a pilgrim, toiled and travel-stained, arrived on the bank. He was a tall and portly man, clad in the usual garb of a religious wanderer of the period. A dark kind of mantle, with loose sleeves, that covered his whole person from the throat to the ankles, was bound round his middle by a white twisted cord, which, after passing twice round his body, was knotted in front, the ends hanging down nearly to his knee. A large hat of foreign manufacture, and strung round the rim with cockle-shells, covered his head;

and shadowed an ample and smooth brow, giving, by its shade, a brighter lustre to the intense fire that burned with a deep and living light in his coal-black eyes. His face was pale and thin, but exceedingly animated and expressive; and his beard of jetty black, curled short, and curving downwards from his mouth, left his care-worn cheek almost bare. His air was gentle and graceful; and though clad in the humble garments of a palmer, his mein and motion were those of a man used to associate with the proud and noble.

The ferryman raised himself from his reclining position. The pilgrim quietly and unmovedly allowed him to enjoy his stare of wonder; and then slowly pointed with his staff towards the island, as indicating a wish to be ferried over. Teague directed his attention to the setting sun, intimating that the hour was past; and then pointed out where the smoke curled above the trees over his cottage at the skirts of the wood, hinting pretty plainly that the pilgrim should be content with a share in the shelter and hospitality of his humble roof until morning. The stranger bowed in thankfulness, laying the fore-finger of his right hand impressively upon his lips, and raising the other one towards the blue vault of heaven; he then crossed both, with an expressive gesture upon his bosom, and hung down his head in silence.

“ Ay, ay,” muttered Teague, in an under tone, “ a vow to hold his peace—some terrible crime to be atoned for, I warrant me, by the severity of the penance—and in one so young too !” And, with a glance upwards of his eye in astonishment and thankfulness to heaven, he led the way to his cabin.

The evening sun had gone down behind the western hills, and the gloom of coming night was darkening the deep-brown woods. The songs of the robin and thrush were hushed, and the pilgrim was seated beside the cheerful hearth of the ferryman, silent and motionless, wrapt up in the shadowy stillness of profound meditation. Teague was seated at some distance, with his eyes resting with something of surprise upon his tacit

guest. He was also busy with his own cogitations—much he marvelled that the holy man at meals or vespers hour had not attempted to offer up his prayers, as was the wont among men devoted, as he seemed to be, to the duties of religion. Both were, however, startled from the depth of their thoughts by the swelling note of a bugle-horn which came pealing from the woods.

Teague started to his limbs, for such sounds were seldom heard on the peaceful shores of the Lake of Penance. The pilgrim also appeared alarmed, for in the inquietude of the moment he cast his flashing eyes to the entrance with a fearful and mystical meaning; and then drawing his ample habit closer round him, seemed to shrink within its folds from scrutiny or observation. When Teague went out, he observed a train of horsemen issuing from the wood. The person who rode foremost, and who appeared to be the chief, was mounted on a beautiful and richly-caparisoned horse of the true Arabian breed, and was dressed in a full suit of the deepest black. A mantle of black velvet, lined with black silk, depended from his shoulders, under which he wore a doublet of fine black cloth, braided with twisted cords of shining silk, and fitting closely to the body; to this were attached trunks and hose of the same material, together with boots of Cordovan-dressed deerskin, reaching loosely to the mid leg. This completed his equipment, except a broad-rimed hat, from which drooped a solitary black feather, shadowing features, stern, proud, and repulsive in their expression, and yet not bad in the abstract. In years he appeared beyond the middle age of man, for on his brow the white and black hairs were mingled in nearly equal portions. The rest of his attendants were clad, as to fashion, in nearly the same style, except a few who were armed at all points; but the colour was different, as suited the taste of the individual wearer—and the stuff coarser, as indicating, perhaps, the degree of rank. In number they were about twenty—all mounted, some leading baggage-mules and spare horses. They looked as after a long journey, for their cattle were travel-soiled and

weary, and their habits dusty, and faces deeply imbrowned. Their fashion and appearance in general differed much from the people of the country—their weapons were even strange—they were evidently men from a foreign land, for they used much gesture in their discourse, and spoke in a strange tongue. Tents were immediately pitched upon the shores of the lake, and fires lighted, and hurry and bustle continued among the strangers, until a late hour; and a strict guard was placed upon the pavilion of him who appeared to be their chief.

Teague retired to his low and humble pallet; and was much surprised, on waking towards midnight, to find that his pilgrim guest had not even then sought his heather couch. With a quick and uneasy step he continued to pace the narrow confines of the cottage until grey dawn, and he then roused the ferryman from his broken slumbers. Teague arose in surprise; but the silent and prayerless palmer placed a large silver coin in his hand, and pointed towards the island. The morning mists were still lying on the surface of the lake, as if a fleece of cloud had descended upon it during the hours of darkness: the air was chill, and the songs of the birds were not yet among the branches of the trees. The inhabitants of the tents, except the wakeful sentinels, were still wrapped in silent sleep, as the palmer, with the stealthy step and the cautious glance of a beast of prey, slid down to the shore, taking the advantage of every tree and copse to hide his person from the watchful strangers. Teague unmoored his boat, and they were soon on the shores of the Island of Penance.

In a short time after the return of Teague, he was summoned to the presence of the chief. He (the stranger) looked upon the ferryman with a glance of mingled suspicion and scrutiny, as if he wished to penetrate the thoughts of his secret heart; but the merry blue eye of Teague never blanched from the examination. He then turned towards a person, who looked in dress superior to the rest of his attendants, and spoke some words in a low tone, to which the other replied in a

style of submissive remonstrance. His objections were, however, overruled, and the nobleman embarked for the island with Teague, and without an attendant.

The cell at that time was a dark cavity, covered with flags and layers of turf. At one end was an altar, raised by one or two steps from the earthen floor ; and at the other a small hole, through which the dim light struggled, serving to show the rude structure in all its uncouth and naked simplicity—bare earthen walls, through which the damps oozed and trickled down in sundry places and in others settled in mildews and blackness. * * *

The nobleman approached the entrance to the dark cell, pausing for a time at the door, and peering anxiously and cautiously into the interior. He ventured a step or two inside, but started back, and stood for some time within the threshold, until his eyes became used to the darkness, so different from the light of the glorious morning sun. He was then enabled to distinguish that there was but one more penitent within its walls, who wrapped closely in a pilgrim's cloak, lay prone upon his face at a short distance from the altar. He was silent—no sigh, no inurmured prayer, escaped his lips ; but, as if shaken and absorbed by the contending emotions and thoughts that occupied and agitated him, he heeded not the approaching steps of the stranger, and nothing but a convulsive swell of the frame told that the being thus extended was still numbered among the living. The haughty-meined stranger approached the altar on the other side, and bending before the rude shrine, he poured forth, from the agony of his spirit, a supplication to heaven for mercy and pardon.

“ Oh God !” he exclaimed, “ and Father of mercy ! have mercy on a wretched sinner ! Forgive me, gracious King of glory ! for my crimes are manifold, and my deeds of evil are hideous in my sight ! Let my tears of penitence wash away the stains of my iniquities, and let a striken and repentant heart find favour in thine eyes.”

A sudden movement of the pilgrim interrupted his supplications, and he looked towards him with something

like alarm. The palmer stood erect before the startled stranger—his brow was bent, as one in strife and fury, and the lightning of his dark eye was fixed upon him with a terrible and fascinating gaze—his left arm was extended towards the richly-dressed stranger, and his right grasped convulsively at something concealed within the folds of his vesture. He advanced with a rapid and quick stride to within a foot of where the stranger stood.

“ We are met alone, and face to face, at last, Raymond Count of Perilleaux,” he almost screamed, in tones at once guttural and agitated, yet with the deep voice of a firm and determined man. “ *Can you* pray to heaven?—*You*, with the blood of innocence crying to that heaven for vengeance against you? *Can you* ask pardon, or hope for mercy, whose heart was shut against the pleadings of the pure and virtuous? *Can you* hope for peace, while *my* vow of revenge is yet unpaid, and this dagger yet unstained with *thy* blood, and still rusty with the gore of *thy* victim? Raymond of Perilleaux, know you not, that while I lived, my life was devoted to your destruction? You have often escaped me, but this is thy last——Nay, stir not—call not. Know you this poinard?” and he drew forth a sharp, blood-stained dagger from his bosom, and advancing it within a few inches of the Count’s face, he laid his other hand firmly upon his head, to keep him down, for he was still upon his knees:—“ Look—’tis your own! Now say your last prayer, if you can pray. I cannot pray, and I am not yet a murderer!”

“ Have mercy, Ugolino!” uttered Raymond, in a trembling voice.

“ Mercy from me?—Ha, ha, ha!” and he laughed with mingled rage and derision. “ Dastard! murderer! this is the mercy which you have given, and this is the mercy which you shall receive!”

He raised the dagger above his head for the fatal plunge; but, with the desperation of a hopeless man, the Count sprang at the uplifted arm. He was still in the strength of his days—for though his brow was

sprinkled with white hairs, his frame was sinewy and unbent, and his step was active and firm. He seized the palmer by the wrist of that hand which held the weapon of destruction; but the grasp of the agile pilgrim was as instantly on his throat, and with an overpowering strength he bore him back against the wall. The despair of the Count nerved him with supernatural powers. He still gripped, with both his hands, the arm that held the blood-stained poinard; but the pilgrim still firmly clung to his throat with a dreadful ferocity. The struggle was terrible!—terrible to look upon! On the one hand, the fury of the palmer working upon his worn, yet marked features, and lighting up his fierce eyes with an expression of the most enraged and demoniac malignity;—on the other, the black and swollen countenance of the Count, on which were marked the extremes of horror and despair—the bursting veins upon the forehead—the eye-balls starting from their sockets—and the convulsed frame working in the dying struggle. It was horrible! Never had the rude walls of the cell witnessed such a contest! At length the strength of the gasping Count began to give way—his hold on the upraised arm waxed faint—his breath became short, strained, and thick, and with a fainting step he again gave way against the spumy wall. He was even sinking, when the palmer wrenching away his hand with a sudden effort, buried the poinard in an instant to the very hilt in the bosom of the wretched Count; and then plucked it forth again, reeking and smoking with his warm heart's blood. The unfortunate Raymond never groaned—his lips merely moved and twitched, but no murmur came to his tongue. His eyes became fixed in vacant earnestness, and the palmer letting go his hold, he staggered forward a few paces and fell heavily against the steps of the little altar, where he expired. * * * * *

ADDENDA.

September, 1840.

In consequence of a Prosecution instituted against the Rev. H. Stowell, of Manchester, for observations made relative to Penances imposed on individuals by the Romish Clergy, the following Authenticated Statements of Facts were made by the parties whose names are affixed to the Documents.

STATEMENTS.

I have lived in various parts of Ireland as a curate of the church of God established in that land, having had charge of parishes in several counties, and in two different provinces, during a continuous period of more than ten years. I have witnessed—in various parts of the county Sligo, of the county Mayo, and of the county Galway—many hundred persons, members of the church of Rome, in the act of performing penances precisely similar to that described in the paper stated to be malicious or libellous. I have seen many hundreds of women, near my own residence, drawing up their petticoats around the lower part of their persons so as to expose the legs and the thighs naked, in the presence of hundreds of men and women, and then prostrating themselves, and crawling on their naked knees and one hand, and then holding up their clothes with the other hand, and thus crawling around what are called holy wells or stations, till their knees were excoriated by the gravel, or by sharp stones, and the blood streaming along their legs. I have also witnessed many hundreds of men in the act of performing a similar form of penance on their bare or naked knees till the blood flowed from the wounds. I have frequently conversed with those persons, and they always described—

and never hesitated to describe—such penances as imposed on them by their respective priests, the priests of the church of Rome; and I have witnessed these performances actually practised in the county Galway, in the front of the parish priest's windows, at every hour of the day, and on every day of the week, for some weeks together—so as that it must have been morally impossible but that the priest must have had personal knowledge of the fact; and I have conversed with a priest and other members of the church of Rome, in Ireland, and they have asserted to me, and have argued against me, that such practices, though regarded by me as degrading and indecent, are not only sanctioned by the priests, but are also a useful kind of religion, suitable for so simple and ignorant a population as that residing in the rural districts of Ireland, as being incapable of appreciating anything better. These practices, in the most degrading and debasing way, and in the most grossly indecent form, are of such constant recurrence, that they are a matter of universal notoriety in those districts; for on some occasions, as on the season called Lady Day—and in some places, as Balla and Croagh Patrick, and others, of which one was only a few hundred yards from my residence, there are not less than many thousand persons performing such penances in the course of the year.

M. HOBART SEYMOUR, M. A.
Curate of St. George's, Southwark.

I was, in the year 1836, a curate in the diocese of Tuam, and at a distance of about seven miles from my residence there was a station for the performances of penance, at which I attended for the purpose of ascertaining the character of the penances there performed, and there I saw hundreds of men, women and children, on their bare knees, traversing first a sharp gravel walk, and afterwards a churchyard, covered with rough flags unevenly placed. I saw the flags smeared with their blood, and I saw the Romish priest of the parish come into the station, superintend it, and pocket the money paid for kissing a wooden crucifix held up by a servant of the priest. This was in the open day, in a public and populous village about twenty miles from the Popish archbishop's residence, and persons from parishes at least fifty miles distant attended, having

been sent there by their priests. I have also seen other penances, fully as revolting and degrading as that said to have been enjoined by Mr Hearne in Manchester, practised at holy wells in Ireland.

BRABAZON ELLIS,

Minister of St. Paul's Church, Burslem, Staffordshire.

I, the Rev. Wm. B. Stoney, saw at Baal, in the County Mayo, in Ireland, on Tuesday, the 11th of August, 1840, two women doing penance—they crawled over the stones and gravel of the chapel yard on their bare knees; they appeared to suffer great torture; one of the unhappy women held a string of beads in one hand, with the other she endeavoured to keep her clothes from getting under her bare knees; the sharp gravel and stones must have lacerated her knees. There are two rude monuments round which the Romanist who do the penance run many times bare-footed, repeating over—Hail Mary! &c. &c.

On Saturday, the 15th of August, 1840, I saw on the mountain of Croagh Patrick, a number of Roman Catholics doing penance. There were, as appeared to me, more than 30 persons; I saw one person who was respectably dressed, crawl on his bare knees along the rough and sharp stones; he crawled thus along a passage into a rude chapel or cairn of stones with great suffering and torture, endeavouring to support himself with a stick and help to relieve the weight of his body. I saw at the same time several others on their bare knees, and many running round bare-footed the top of the mountain, about 400 yards of rugged rocky ground. One poor creature had her feet so swollen that she could not put on her boots, for she was a well dressed and respectable looking person. She tried but failed, and was obliged to go down on her bare feet. Some of the poor devotees complained of the torture; they said the stones and gravel penetrated into their feet; they go 15 times round they top bare-footed, or once bare-kneed. Penance doers have their choice; they repeat seven aves, seven paters, and a creed before they begin, and on concluding, on their bare knees.

Some of the devotees told me that some time before, a Roman Catholic priest was on the mountain—performed service there, and went through a station.

There are two stations for penance (going up and down the mountain one on each side) where similar rounds are to be gone through, and penance performed on the bare knees ; the ascent up to the cove or top of the mountain is exceedingly laborious and difficult, being two miles of up-hill, rugged and distressing.

WILLIAM BAKER STONEY, B.A.
Rector of Castlebar, Ireland.

I do hereby certify that I have lived in Ireland for five and twenty years, and am intimately acquainted with the working of Popery, and have witnessed those practices which are similar to that stated to be libellous and malicious in the trial of Hearne *v.* Stowell.

On a visit to the town of Westport in the West of Ireland, I was induced to go see the far-famed Croagh Patrick, where penance was performed daily to make satisfaction for sin. On the occasion alluded to I accompanied a pilgrim (a person from my native town) to the top of the mountain, where I saw the aforesaid pilgrim engaged in the performance of penance, which consisted of going once round the circumference of the top of the mountain on bared knees, or fifteen times bare-foot : the former mode of doing penance was on this occasion adopted by the pilgrim. On my inquiry into the object of this penance, I was informed that in doing this penance she was discharging an obligation imposed on her by her priest, on the event of her recovery from sickness. That the above-mentioned pilgrim did undergo this affliction on bared knees, I was, and am ready to certify on oath. I can also bear testimony to my having frequently seen the Roman Catholics of Ireland engaged in the practice of doing penance at one of the so called holy wells in Ireland, where I have myself seen them in hundreds going round the well, in the performance of such penance, on bare knees, oftentimes kissing the ground over which they were crawling ; and on the completion of the proposed duty I have seen the pilgrim at these wells leave a piece of rag tied to the tree, as a memorial of their pilgrimage.

GEORGE FITZGERALD GALAKER, B.A.
Curate of Weaverham.

I officiated as a Roman Catholic priest in the town of Toomavara, county Tipperary, Ireland, for nine months. During the discharge of my public ministry in that part of Ireland I have seen Roman Catholic men and women, of that town and parish, do penance within the walls of the chapel of that town, crawling on their hands and bare knees until the blood actually trickled to the ground. In conjunction with the Romish priest of that parish, I obliged ten or twelve men, Roman Catholics, to do public penance in the open air, bare-foot and bare-headed, for six consecutive days, for having met on a Sunday morning, to decide an old quarrel with an opposing party. In the parish of Birr, King's county, Ireland, where I officiated as a Roman Catholic priest during six years, I witnessed similar scenes, and subjected both men and women of that parish to penances within the walls of that chapel, until the blood trickled down to the ground. I have witnessed Roman Catholic men and women perform public penance, at St. Shannon's Well, Doonass, County Clare, crawling on their hands and bare knees, on a hard pebbly ground, until the blood trickled down to the ground. I have heard of similar public penances performed by Roman Catholics at holy wells in Ireland, where the priests are in the habit of attending, to hear the confessions of these votaries of Romish superstition, and to receive money for such confessions. I have never heard Roman Catholic priests condemn or raise their voices against such abominable practices. I have seen a late relative of mine, a Roman Catholic priest, bring several of his parishioners to the chapel, bare-foot and bare-headed, in white sheets, and with large stones on their heads, for having met on Sunday morning to decide an old quarrel. These public penances are a part and parcel of Popery. These scenes are of such frequent recurrence in Ireland, that even among Protestants they excite no astonishment or surprize. As a witness on the part of the defendant at the late trial at Liverpool, I must sincerely regret I have not had an opportunity of making this statement.

MICHAEL CROTTY,

Protestant Curate of Norbury Church, Hasel
Grove, Cheshire.

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